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EDITORIAL

TEMBLORS IN THE GRANITE

That sturdy old American political weathervane, the New Hampshire primary, has become more like the whirling arrow on the television quiz show Wheel of Fortune*: a media game of who won, who lost, who's up, who's down, what's this week's soundbite. But deeper forces were at work in the Granite State, and, as Andrew Kopkind argues below, they set off reverberations that could shake the superstructure of American politics.*

Manchester, New Hampshire

The deconstruction of the two major parties is proceeding according to schedule. The myth of the Republican majority was shattered in the New Hampshire primary by Pat Buchanan, just as Eugene McCarthy destroyed the obsolete idea of a Democratic majority in the same primary twenty-four years ago. As for the Democrats this time, the triumph of Paul Tsongas and the self-defined "comeback" of Bill Clinton complete the transformation of the party into a neoliberal sect, with no room for the class, ethnic and ideological constituencies that have maintained separate identities (and power) in coalitions since the New Deal. In other words, the Republicans' "big tent" just collapsed, and the bulk of Democratic activists are disfranchised.

It's not accurate to dismiss Buchanan's vote as a mere "protest," devoid of political attributes. Buchanan has a real base in the electorate. His people may not follow every outrageous line laid down in his newspaper columns and TV chats, but they are situated well to the right of the center tent pole planted by the latter-day Reagan Administration and its successor. In New Hampshire, the vanguard of Buchananism are the "new redundants," those who have no place in the downsized economy of the present and those who feel they will be out of luck in the future. They blame their fate

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DEFENSIVE ABOUT DEFENSE CUTS

ROBERT L. BOROSAGE

Congress convened in January for a grand debate on the country's direction. The longest recession since the Great Depression provided the imperative; the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the opportunity. Half the U.S. military budget—about $150 billion a year—has been devoted to defending Europe and Japan against a threat that no longer exists. That money could now be reinvested at home to get the economy moving again. The debate was like a bizarre opening of a new, long-awaited drama: The stage is set, the audience on edge, the critics abuzz. The curtains rise, but the players have decided they aren't up to the new script. They offer up familiar lines from an old melodrama instead.

Meanwhile, President Bush, in his State of the Union Message, hailed changes in the world of "almost biblical proportion," but his budget was that of a nonbeliever. The Democratic presidential campaign chose this moment to descend into a long wallow about catching the drift and avoiding the draft. The Congressional leadership (now *there's* an oxymoron) went into high pander over tax cuts.

The President, reared on the cold war, has a simple "mission." He will defend as much of the military budget as he can. However, it's not that easy anymore. The Soviet Union doesn't exist. Russian President Boris Yeltsin has slashed the Russian military procurement by 80 percent. The giant Iuzhmash factory that once made the feared SS-18 missile now builds sausage-making machines capable of churning out 3.5 tons of kielbasa an hour—

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EXCHANGE.

Jousting After Camelot

THE SWORD AND THE STONE

New York City

I'm afraid my friend Alexander Cockburn has missed the main point of Oliver Stone's *JFK* ["Beat the Devil," Jan. 6/13]. As coscreenwriter of the film, I can assure Alexander that its intent was not to transform John Kennedy into a white knight who singlehandedly would have ended the cold war had he lived. Rather, it was to show that the economic, military and intelligence institutions committed to fanatical anticommunism were far more powerful than any elected official and would stop at nothing to continue their enormously profitable cold war crusade.

Historians differ on whether Kennedy would have pulled out of Vietnam, continued limited assistance or escalated the war by committing massive numbers of U.S. combat troops. Cockburn and others argue that Kennedy was elected as a cold warrior, built up the military, made a number of hawkish public statements defending U.S. involvement in Vietnam and thus could have been expected to do just what Lyndon Johnson did later.

That position, while largely accurate about Kennedy's early years in office, ignores crucial evidence. As John Newman shows in his book *JFK and Vietnam*, Kennedy turned down numerous requests from his advisers and the Joint Chiefs of Staff to send troops to either Laos or Vietnam. While Cockburn may dismiss as "political opportunism" Kennedy's private statements to Senators Mike Mansfield and Wayne Morse, as well as to aide Kenneth O'Donnell, that he intended to withdraw all U.S. advisers from Vietnam after the 1964 elections, it is more difficult to dismiss National Security Action Memorandum 263. Signed by Kennedy on October 11, 1963, it unequivocally ordered the withdrawal of 1,000 U.S. advisers by the end of 1963. The existence of that memorandum is *fact*. The *speculation* is that Kennedy might not have carried out the order had he lived.

Cockburn quotes part of NSAM 273, signed by Lyndon Johnson four days after Kennedy's assassination, and says it contained no change in policy from a draft written before the assassination. This interpretation neglects entirely paragraph 7 of that document, which gave the go-ahead for *U.S. forces* to develop covert military operations against North Vietnam. In the early draft, such operations were to be carried out by "*Government of Vietnam resources*." The distinction is important because it was such covert operations by U.S. Navy ships that led to the Tonkin Gulf incident, which in turn opened the door for U.S. troops to be sent en masse to Vietnam.

JFK presents the hypothesis that Kennedy was assassinated because those institutional forces with a vested interest in the cold war perceived him as a threat. Allen Dulles, Gen. Charles Cabell and Richard Bissell, all fired from the highest echelons of the C.I.A., felt Kennedy had betrayed them at the Bay of Pigs by refusing to provide air cover. Cuban exiles and right-wing mercenaries trained by the C.I.A. under Operation Mongoose for a second invasion of Cuba were enraged at Kennedy for ordering their training camps raided and all their weapons and ammunition confiscated in the summer of 1963. (The head of Operation Mongoose, Gen. Edward Lansdale, had spent much of his career conducting black operations in Southeast Asia and had lobbied for the ambassadorship to Vietnam, but Kennedy rejected him.)

The Joint Chiefs and others in the Pentagon felt Kennedy had caved in to the Communists in October 1962 by reaching, over their objections, a secret agreement with Khrushchev not to invade Cuba in exchange for withdrawal of Soviet missiles from the island. Kennedy had also signed a nuclear test ban treaty with the Russians in the summer of 1963, again over the objections of the Joint Chiefs. And he had initiated back-channel overtures to Fidel Castro to try to normalize relations with Cuba—a process that was under way, according to Castro, when Kennedy was killed.

All this had the Pentagon and the intelligence community in an uproar. Cockburn and others on the left may view Kennedy as just another cold warrior, but *JFK* makes the case that the right saw him as an appeaser of Communism and had him executed for that reason. It is possible to acknowledge Kennedy's cold war history and at the same time believe he had changed enough—or talked about change enough—to be perceived as a genuine threat to war profiteers on the right.

Finally, Alexander's idea that "the psychic bloodlines of *JFK*" may be traced to Ellen Ray's "Catholic girlhood in Massachusetts, with an icon of J.F.K. on the wall" is amusing but makes about as much sense as the notion that Cockburn's view on *JFK* may be traced to his own childhood surrounded by icons of Stalin. Has Alexander forgotten that Ellen was raised in Nebraska and that her father was an unapologetic atheist?

Zachary Sklar

THE QUEST FOR THE GRAIL

Berkeley, Calif.

Orwell once made a remark to the effect that only an intellectual could say something so stupid. I was reminded of it reading Alexander Cockburn's efforts to use the undoubted fictions in Oliver Stone's *JFK* as a pretext for denying two of its incontrovertible facts: that in late 1963 Kennedy had authorized an initial withdrawal of 1,000 U.S. troops from Vietnam, and that, in a high-level meeting right after Kennedy's murder, Johnson redirected U.S. Vietnam policy from this graduated disengagement to graduated escalation.

Cockburn suggests that my "fantasizing" about Vietnam is in Oliver Stone's movie because of John Newman's *JFK and Vietnam*, which "first came into the offices of Sheridan Square Press . . . whence it was passed on to Stone, who assisted in its dispatch to Warner Books (part of the conglomerate backing *JFK*), which is publishing the book in February." But the fantasizing here is Cockburn's. Newman, a professional historian, sent his book first to Warner, which signed a contract for it in April 1991. Stone never saw the manuscript until August. The book will gain a large and respectful readership—not because of corporate linkages, or someone's Catholic girlhood, but because it meticulously documents allegations I could make only tentatively twenty years ago in an article. That article absolutely did not assert, as Cockburn implies, "that J.F.K. would have pulled the United States out of Vietnam."

What Kennedy would or would not have done, had he lived, is of course speculation. But his policies at the time of his death are a matter of record, a strenuously suppressed record, to be sure, but a record I was able to reconstruct deductively from the "Pentagon Papers." The most cowardly feature of Cockburn's essay is his decision to attack my tentative reconstruction from limited evidence in 1971 rather than from Newman's massive documentation of the same basic case today. That argument included the following propositions:

1) Kennedy planned, over the most vigorous dissent of his Joint Chiefs, "to withdraw 1000 U.S. military personnel [from Vietnam] by the end of 1963." This withdrawal was in accordance with a more long-range program to train Vietnamese, making it "possible to withdraw the bulk of U.S. personnel . . . by the end of 1965."

This language did not come from antiwar Senators Mike Mansfield and Wayne Morse, as Cockburn asserts. This language is taken from the Top Secret Military Recommendations to the President by Defense Secretary Robert McNamara and Gen. Maxwell Taylor on October 2, 1963. The "presently prepared plans" to withdraw 1,000 troops, which they then recommended announcing, had in fact been approved at a conference the preceding May.

2) In NSAM 263 of October 11, Kennedy secretly approved the McNamara-Taylor recommendation "to announce in the very near future" withdrawing 1,000 troops, "as an initial step in a long-term program to replace U.S. personnel." He directed then "that no formal announcement be made of the implementation" of these plans, but in November the secrecy was lifted, with the President suggesting that the details would come from a top-level Honolulu conference on November 20. *The New York Times* published the an-

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EDITORIALS.

Temblors

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

on George Bush, and it's certainly true that the cut-taxes-and-spend-on-war policies of the past decade have played a part in the general decline. But Buchanan gives them a wilder, more satisfying explanation: Their privations and anxieties are caused by insidious "Asian traders"; by immigrants from dark corners of the earth; by welfare dependents in urban ghettos; by the "Washington establishment" types who give taxpayers' money to every Tom, Dick and Yitzhak who holds out his hand; by abortionists, "feminazis," eco-fascists and perverts.

In fact, the *echt* Buchananites are nothing more than the flotsam and jetsam of late imperial capitalism, and their woes are embedded in the decaying system that they hoped would always treat them well. They loved the tax cuts, the military-based jobs, the cheap gas, the classy imports from all over the world to fill the shops in unbroken strips of malls and supermarket plazas along a new Siegfried line: "From dawn to dusk, the Buchanan brigades met King George's army all along the Concord-Manchester-Nashua line, and I am here to report

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they are retreating . . ." the victorious candidate exulted. But the world behind the line is crumbling as well, and Buchanan hasn't a clue what to do.

Paul Tsongas's "economic patriotism" is not that much different from Buchanan's "America first" philosophy. Both candidates bemoan the decline of the domestic manufacturing sector and advise their followers to buy American products. Both favor selective protectionism, under different names. Buchanan demands that the Asian traders open up their own markets and stop dumping their goods over here. Tsongas would lavish money, support and adoration on American "business" to make it competitive with the same Asian traders and their European counterparts. He believes that with enough love and a fistful of dollars, business will invest in manufacturing plant, hire millions of displaced and unemployed workers and fill the shopping malls once again.

It's hardly surprising that the voters in New Hampshire bought such dreams, spun more frothily by Bill Clinton. Indeed, for a decade or more, neoliberal Democrats as well as Reaganite Republicans have been telling Americans that the real economic problems of the country are caused by restrictions on business—regulations, taxes, labor demands, transfer payments to the poor, affirmative action, "big government." But the message has been muddied by the intrusions of reality, and now come Buchanan and Tsongas/Clinton to purify the creed.

Certainly the primary here was no different from other American elections in that personality, media manipulation and dumb luck seemed to determine the outcome more than issues. Clinton would have sailed to a victory if the adultery and draft-dodging accusations had come only a few weeks later. Tsongas's nerdy affect, ridiculed by all, was apparently read by the electorate as authenticity and sincerity rather than weakness and impotence. (Watch for a new noun, "tsongas," as the antonym for charisma; it echoes both *tsoris* and *angst*.)

But the ways in which the candidates of both parties waged their campaigns suggest that the profound changes in economic and social conditions in America that began toward the end of the Vietnam era, and the pressures on political consciousness that ensued, are now producing crises in both camps. The Republicans find they cannot fix what's broke in America with the toy tools of Reaganism (privatism and deregulation) or the lame measures of right-wing Keynesianism (tax cuts for the rich, relief for bondholders). Bush is finding that he has nothing to say to those voters who believed his promises of prosperity in 1988 and now feel betrayed. But to embrace the Buchanan bund would be to abandon the prosperous, if anxious, upper middle class—where many presidential elections have been won and lost—to the Democrats. As the wise man said, "You can't ride two horses with one *tochis*."

Buchanan is already moving the entire campaign to the right, an extremely ominous development for labor, minorities, women and progressive constituencies: those whom Gary Hart marked for life as "special interests," anathema to Republicans and a drag on Democratic candidates. The left side of the Democratic Party could hardly make itself heard in this first primary. Tom Harkin talked a lot about the working class and a program of public investment, but he shut out progressive activists in New Hampshire and elsewhere, relying instead on a decomposing superstructure of party regulars, union oldtimers and political hired guns. He never acquired the new vocabulary, the new consciousness or the new strategies to connect with the voters he sought.

Jerry Brown, on the other hand, got better as the campaign progressed. Although his flat-tax plan remains gimmicky and problematic, he began to see how a left coalition could work within a Democratic campaign, and he widened his reach into the excluded communities. He wound up with roughly the percentage Jesse Jackson got in 1988. Ralph Nader's write-in campaign attracted large and attentive audiences but few write-ins. The bizarre campaign of former Irvine, California, Mayor Larry Agran, while unexceptionably progressive in rhetoric, had no serious political strategy and proved ultimately pointless.

New Hampshire is not America, but the outcome here is not likely to be contradicted as the candidates and their media posses move south and west. The paralysis that has been troubling American government for some time seems to be spreading apace. It now grips the electorate as well as the elites. As losing and winning candidates always say on election night, This is not the end of something, it's the beginning.

ANDREW KOPKIND

Defense Cuts

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

equally deadly no doubt, but not pointed at us.

"We no longer have the luxury of having a threat to prepare for," admits Gen. Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Pentagon's Annual National Military Strategy sounds almost doleful. Other than "a North Korea, a weakened Iraq, and perhaps even a hostile Iran as specific threats," the Chiefs admit, it is hard to list a threat "without straining credulity." Since what we do know won't help, the Chiefs justify the $295 billion defense budget by what we can't know: "The real threat we now face is the threat of the unknown, the uncertain." They call on us to arm against the threat of "being unprepared" for "a crisis or war that no one predicted or expected."

The Administration strategy is twofold. First, it will emphasize the cuts already being made. Before the demise of the U.S.S.R., the President outlined a six-year, 25 percent reduction in the military. That sounds impressive until you remember that Reagan doubled the military budget. At the end of the reductions, we will still be spending far more in real dollars than Nixon, Ford or Carter did when the Russian bear was supposedly on the prowl. In his speech to the nation, the President claimed another $50 billion in savings over five years (actually only $27 billion in outlays would be saved). Fifty billion is a lot of money, but it represents barely 3 percent of the $1.46 trillion the President plans to spend on the military in that time.

Second, the White House relies on the economic disruption caused by cutbacks to curb any Congressional appetite for further reductions. A cut in military spending, O.M.B. Di-

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rector Richard Darman warned, "while politically popular in the abstract, will not be politically popular in all its particulars." In many localities, military bases or construction contracts are the foundation of the economy. Unionized workers in military industries face layoffs in a no-growth economy in which manufacturers are shedding workers faster than a collie drops hair in a hot July. In Connecticut, preliminary state studies suggest, laid-off military production workers end up taking jobs at 70 percent of their previous pay—if they can get work at all.

The President cynically plays on their distress. When Colorado Governor Roy Romer challenged him to reduce military spending faster and reinvest it at home, Bush didn't mention the threat of the unknown. "What bases do you want to close? What areas do you want to shut down?" Bush snapped. "Or do you want to lay off the people?" Defense Secretary Dick Cheney has made "jobs, jobs, jobs" the first line of defense for the military budget. The Stealth bomber, said Cheney in a revealing slip, "carries a large payroll, er, payload."

It has been left to conservative Senator Sam Nunn to call for conversion planning, a G.I. bill for displaced workers and soldiers. When Congress allocated $200 million for conversion last year, the White House sat on the money for months. The President's current budget would slash funding for the very programs—community development block grants, economic development administration, job-training subsidies—that have provided much of the support for local community planning. Bush even chose to "zero out" the $2.7 million National Veterans Training Institute, which instructs job-placement workers in the special problems of finding employment for veterans.

This strategy reduces legislators to their accustomed role of defending contracts for their districts. As Representative Les Aspin, Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, has suggested, the battle on military spending is no longer between conservatives and liberals but between members who have significant military contracts or bases at risk and those who do not. So while increasing numbers of defense experts have come to agree that the military budget could be cut by 50 percent over the next five years, bringing savings of some $200 billion more than would the President's plan, Congress, if left to its own devices, is likely to end up closer to the President's plan.

Sacrificed in all this maneuvering is the national interest. As even corporate leaders understand, the economy desperately needs new public investment—in children, in education and training, in rebuilding a decrepit infrastructure, in civilian research and development. Over the past decade we have slashed spending in areas vital to a dynamic economy while investing in a powerful military. We have the strongest military force in the world, but we remain the only industrial country without an apprenticeship program for the 75 percent of young people who don't go to college. Our fastest trains are slower than our fastest trains of 100 years ago. People can't afford to get sick. A bridge collapses every other day.

As the editors of *Business Week* and *The New York Times* have argued, new public investment is the best short-term response to the current economic downturn. Middle-class tax breaks will only be used either to pay off personal debt (and thus will have little effect) or on consumption, no small portion on goods made abroad. But public investment can increase long-term productivity while providing immediate jobs here at home. Moreover, only a public investment program, including job retraining and conversion of plants to civilian uses, can help defense workers and their communities adjust to military cutbacks.

Ironically, opinion polls—the oracles of modern politics—suggest that the public understands this better than the politicians. In the latest *New York Times* poll, 72 percent of Americans called for military savings to be invested in domestic needs; only 8 percent supported using the money to pay for tax cuts. The public sees the money that was spent on the military as a sacrifice we made for a common purpose, a national good. If changes in the world allow a reduction in military spending, then Americans want to use the money to meet the new challenges we face. The people are far less selfish than the politicians make them out to be.

Despite the opportunity, the need and the public support, the call for reinvestment in America is barely heard in the current debate. The Berlin wall no longer exists, but the President wants to preserve the 1990 budget wall that prohibits investing defense savings at home. Legislators have convinced themselves that they will fare better in upcoming elections if they give Americans a tax break rather than a new direction. Historic changes of "biblical proportion" abroad have not yet disrupted histrionic politics of bilious posturing at home. The changes this country so badly needs will come only if the public demands them. That will require a broad and massive mobilization of opinion to overcome the braking mechanisms in Washington. If we don't change our priorities now, we will pay for it later. The country will surely grow poorer. And it will take a lot of "unexpected crises and wars" to justify spending $250 billion a year on the military indefinitely.

ROBERT L. BOROSAGE

Robert L. Borosage, political director of the Campaign for New Priorities, is a senior fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies.

★

THE NEW WORLD ORDER—CENTRAL EUROPEAN DIVISION

Croatians are the good guys now,
Although their past is slightly shady.
So worry not that these same guys
Chased both your bubbe *and your* zayde.

Calvin Trillin

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

In Defense of the Warren Commission

In mid-February, for the benefit of television viewers in Australia, I found myself squaring off on the subject of *JFK* against Fletcher Prouty and Carl Oglesby. Perched on a stool beside me in a Los Angeles studio was Wesley J. Liebeler, a 60-year-old professor of law at U.C.L.A. Originally from North Dakota and conservative/libertarian in political outlook, Liebeler was one of the staff counsels on the Warren Commission. Later, in a week when *JFK* got eight Academy Award nominations, and when Richard Heffner, a Rutgers professor who is also chairman of the motion picture industry's film rating system, announced in the *Los Angeles Times* that *JFK* marked the end of the Gutenberg era and the dawn of a new way of telling history, I drove up to Zuma Beach and interviewed Liebeler.

AC: *What about the speed at which Oswald would have had to fire his Mannlicher-Carcano? Critics of the Warren Commission say Oswald could never have loosed off the shots in so short a time.*

WJL: The clock for the whole thing is the Zapruder film, which runs at 18.3 frames a second. The film shows only two shots striking the people in the car. A time fix on the first shot can't be precise, for reasons I'll come back to. But the time of impact of the second shot that struck is precise. That was at frames 312-313 of the Zapruder film. At frame 313 the head just explodes. So either at 312 or 313, which is practically the same instant. And that's the last shot for which there is any evidence of anything in the car being struck.

The first shot hit, in the view of the Warren Commission, between frames 210 and 225. The commission came to that conclusion based on the Zapruder film, which shows that at a certain point Kennedy was reacting to a shot. He raises his hands up. During part of that time the limousine is behind a road sign, so it can't be seen for about .9 of a second. So you can't tell how long before the reaction the shot actually struck.

The House Assassination Committee (1978) said the first shot struck around frame 190, which is a little sooner, about a second. So to establish the time frame the Warren Commission subtracted either 210 or 225 from 312, and divided that by 18.3. Let's say 210. This gives us 5.6 seconds. Take 313 and subtract 225, and divide that by 18.3 and that gives 4.8 seconds. So the commission said that the time lapse between the first shot that hit and the second shot that hit was between 4.8 and 5.6 seconds.

If we assume that three shots were fired, you have the question of which shot missed. The House committee concluded that the first shot missed. The Warren Commission never decided on the matter. The evidence is consistent with the proposition that the first shot missed. If so, all Oswald had to do was fire one more shot. So in fact he would have had from 4.8 to 5.6 seconds to fire one shot, not three shots.

AC: *So, on that explication, he's waiting with his gun aimed. The car comes along, he shoots and misses. But there's no time fix as to when he might have fired that shot. It wasn't in the famous 4.8 to 5.6 second interval. He reloads and then fires the shot that hits the President in the neck between frames 210 or 225 according to the Warren Commission, or 190 according to the House committee.*

WJL: Right. Now he has to reload (which takes a minimum of 2.3 seconds), work the bolt once and fire the third shot that's fired (the second shot that strikes). And he has, according to the Warren Commission, 4.8 to 5.6 seconds. That is even time enough to fire twice, which he would have had to do if the second shot missed. If, as the House committee said, the first shot that hit was fired at frame 190, then Oswald had 6.72 seconds to fire either one or two shots. That is 313 minus 190, divided by 18.3. There was enough time.

You know, people harp on about the Warren Commission, which is fine. But the House Assassination Committee confirmed every single finding that the Warren Commission made—every one, except on the conspiracy question.

AC: *Well, what about that?*

WJL: The only evidence for conspiracy that the House committee had was a Dictabelt tape that recorded police radio transmissions. That was discovered long after the event in a file cabinet in the Dallas Police Department. There were two different radio frequencies that the Dallas Police Department used to transmit messages back and forth among the police. Both those frequencies were separately recorded. The Warren Commission didn't know anything about this evidence. When you listen to the Dictabelt there's no sound of shots at all. But the House committee took this Dictabelt and gave it to an audio consulting firm in Boston that did an analysis and found some pulses. The Dictabelt had been recording from a motorcycle somewhere that had its microphone stuck open. The consultants claimed they could distinguish four different pulse phenomena, three of which could be made to correspond to the shots we've just talked about, if you pushed the first shot back to frame 190. And there was a fourth pulse. So the consultants went down to Dealey Plaza, set up microphones, fired off rifles and established what they called an audio footprint, and said initially that there was a 50–50 probability of a shot fired from the grassy knoll. This was in September of 1978. Then in December, right before the House committee closed up shop on the hearings, the audio consulting firm came up with a 95 percent probability on this same shot. So on the basis of that evidence the 1978 House committee concluded there was probably a conspiracy, that there was a guy on the grassy knoll shooting, though he didn't hit anybody. Robert Blakey, the committee's chief counsel, then gave the Dictabelt to the Justice Department to be analyzed further. Later he wrote a letter to *National Review* saying that if the Justice Department's investigation of the tape didn't bear out the 95 percent probability of another shot, he'd retract the whole conspiracy theory.

Well, the Justice Department turned all this over to a panel of acoustic experts set up by the National Research Council. They figured out that sounds on both Dictabelts could be matched, and since the one had a time reference, they could

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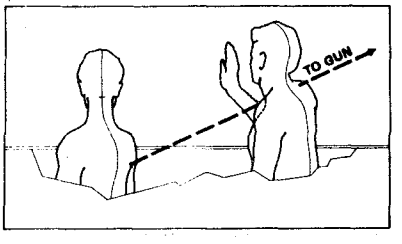
ALEXANDER COCKBURN

fix the time frame on the other Dictabelt as well. The N.R.C. acoustic committee then concluded that the sounds on the second Dictabelt were recorded more than a minute after the assassination occurred. So they didn't have anything to do with the shots in Dealey Plaza.

AC: *The other thing that seems to cause people a lot of problems is the "single-bullet theory"—the first shot that hit Kennedy and also John Connally.*
WJL: The first shot that hit went through the top of Kennedy's back, came through the throat to the right of his trachea, didn't hit any bones. Governor Connally was struck right below the right armpit in the back. The bullet went down through his chest cavity, came out just below his right nipple, struck him on the back side of his right wrist at the joint, broke the wrist and came out the front of his wrist and entered his thigh, making a very shallow hole.

The pathology panel of the House committee and also the Warren Commission concluded that the damage to Connally was done by one bullet. Work it backwards. If his hand was on his thigh, which is consistent with the Zapruder film, you know that the bullet wasn't going very fast when it came out the underside of the wrist, which has implications about how fast it was going when it entered the wrist. If it had already gone through Connally's chest cavity and the President's neck it had been slowed down. A wounds ballistic expert testifying to the House committee established that there's a range of velocity within which a bullet will break a bone without hurting the bullet, provided it's not going too fast.



Warren Commission Exhibit 399 is the so-called "magic" or "pristine" bullet. It is neither one. It is in good shape, but eight of the nine forensic pathologists on the House committee medical panel agreed that it had gone through the President's neck or upper back and then inflicted all of Connally's wounds. Ask yourself where the bullet went after it came out of the President's neck if it didn't hit Connally. After coursing downward through the President's body, where it hit no bone to deflect it, either it's got to hit Connally, who is sitting right in front of him, or it's got to hit the car. It didn't hit the car.

The Warren Commission did a re-enactment of the assassination which showed that the President and Governor were located in a way that the bullet would have gone directly from the exit wound in the President's neck into Connally's back. The House committee used a different method of calculating the trajectory and unequivocally confirmed the Warren Commission findings that one bullet—CE 399—did go through the President and inflict the Governor's wounds. The House committee said flatly that the trajectory it established supported the single-bullet theory.

Oliver Stone's treatment of this question is simply a lie, and he knows it. The House committee confirmed the Warren Commission's findings on this point without qualification. But with the conspiracy Stone has fabricated, the addition of the House of Representatives won't cause any further problems. He's got half the country in on it now.

I have challenged him to debate the validity of the Warren Report. Naturally he issued a press release saying he'd be happy to do it, but he never responded to me. He's engaged in scholarship by press release. I repeat my challenge.

AC: *In the Zapruder film, at frame 313, when the second bullet strikes, Kennedy's head jerks back convulsively, and people have reckoned this implies a shot from the front.*
WJL: If you look at Kennedy's head, right at frame 313, just as the bullet strikes it, it doesn't move backward. It moves slightly to the left and downward, just for two or three frames, which is consistent with a bullet striking it from behind and nowhere else, because the momentum of the bullet is imparted instantly.

Then shortly after frames 312-313 the President's body goes backward. The House committee said there are two explanations. One is the jet effect, caused by the skull and brain exiting and forcing the head back and to the left. Combined with that effect, the committee said, was a neuromuscular reaction. The medical evidence is the best way to determine the direction of the shots that hit the President. Take the skull. The entry wound in the back of his head is "coned" on the inside of the skull. What can be constructed of the exit wound from the skull is coned on the outside. The House medical panel all agreed to these conclusions, and also that the wound on the President's upper right back could only be an entrance wound. Eight of the nine pathologists on that panel concluded that the President was struck by two *and only two* shots. The medical evidence excludes the possibility that the President was struck by a shot fired from any direction other than behind him.

AC: *Why didn't the Warren Commission have access to the autopsy photographs and X-rays?*
WJL: Warren didn't want to press Bobby Kennedy, who controlled them, for their release. The worst consequence was the idea that someone was trying to hide something. Without these materials the autopsy surgeons described to the commission their recollection of the wounds, and their medical artist drew the diagrams showing the entrance wounds in the wrong place.

AC: *What happened to Kennedy's brain?*
WJL: The brain was under Robert Kennedy's control when it disappeared. It is widely believed that he destroyed it. He was afraid that these materials might end up on public display.

AC: *Do you think the Warren Report was flawed?*
WJL: It was too oracular, overwritten. Also I think it relied

(*Continued on Page 306*)

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BY ROBERT GROSSMAN
CAP'N BUSHY
THE MOST POWERFUL SQUIRREL ON EARTH DOESN'T HAVE TO EAT BROCCOLI AND CAN RUN AND PLAY AS MUCH AS HE LIKES!
AND YET—IS IT POSSIBLE CAP'N BUSHY HAS BECOME JUST A LITTLE—ISOLATED?
I NEED TO GET OUT MORE!
YES! IT'S TIME I EXPLORED MY REALMS AND LEARNED ABOUT THE LIFE OF THE AVERAGE CREATURE!
—TO FACILITATE MY OBSERVATIONS I SHALL GO DISGUISED AS THIS AVERAGE SHRUB!
INCOGNITO, BUSHY ENTERS AN AVERAGE STORE:
YIKES!! WHAT'S THAT??
AN ABACUS—OUR SCANNERS HAVE ALL BEEN REPOSSESSED!
INSTEAD OF SHOPPING, OUR CUSTOMERS HAVE ALL DECIDED TO FORAGE FOR EDIBLE PLANT LIFE.
COULD BE IT'S THE RIGHT THING TO DO.
AS HE EXITS THE DESERTED EMPORIUM:
LOOK EVERYBODY— LUNCH!!!
IS THAT A BROCCOLI, MAMA?
PHYSICAL FITNESS PAYS OFF AS BUSHY OUTRUNS THE HUNGRY MOB, ARRIVES HOME AND SETTLES DOWN WITH THE PAPER:
HMMM—A SCIENTIST HAS DISCOVERED THAT PESSIMISTIC SONG LYRICS BRING ABOUT HARD TIMES AND OPTIMISTIC SONGS DO THE OPPOSITE.
CLICK!
—AND NOW TODAY'S TOP TUNE: "WE'LL HAVE TO SELL THE CHILDREN."
THIS WILL NEVER DO.
FEW PEOPLE KNOW IT, BUT WITH ALL HIS MANY TALENTS CAP'N BUSHY IS ALSO A PRETTY GOOD SONGWRITER:
ARISE, ARISE O CITIZENS, GET OFF YOUR BEDS AND COTS, A BRIGHT NEW DAY IS DAWNING NOW, WITH LESS TAX ON YOUR YACHTS!

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ARTICLES.

TOWARD A NEW SOUTH AFRICA—I

Talking as Fast As They Can

MARK GEVISSER

Johannesburg

Almost every day, newspaper headlines over here try to buoy the flagging New South Africa ship by declaring the African National Congress and the National Party government to be "Closer Than Ever" in their negotiations over a new constitution. But 1992, South Africa's putative Year of Transition, has gotten off to a disquieting start, with a bloody round of seemingly unpolitical violence.

In the drought-ridden conservative heartland, or *platteland*, there has been a spate of mass murders committed by disturbed young Afrikaner men. In Ladysmith, for example, Kallie Delport had a dispute with his father over some cattle, killed his family and then rushed into the street to spray indiscriminate gunfire on a dozen black passers-by. Very similar incidents have taken place in three other country towns.

Meanwhile, in the crumbling townships around Johannesburg, black youths, caught between the promises of revolution and the vagaries of change, have been assaulting and burning their white teachers in an eerie throwback to the student uprisings of the prenegotiations era.

Unlike the far-right bombings that took place over Christmas or the black-on-black violence that continues to claim a handful of victims daily on the trains in and out of Soweto, neither of these new trends seems to have any connection to the organized political forces at work in South Africa. They are fallouts, rather; the dark irruptions of a collective unconscious no longer able to take the strain.

We in South Africa are in our cocoon years. And the expectations we bear—that this society, a fractious and segmented caterpillar for more than 300 years, will emerge from negotiations a beautifully united butterfly—are, quite literally, killing us. Little wonder that the architects of the New South Africa, F.W. de Klerk and Nelson Mandela, are beginning to show palpable signs of desperation, outdoing each other in timetables that will usher in their New South Africas—which are by no means the same—before year's end. The theory on both sides seems to be that the butterfly must be coerced out of its cocoon as quickly as possible, before the growing shudders of random violence and orchestrated counterrevolution shake the tree so forcefully that the cocoon, hanging on by the thinnest of dream-spun threads, comes crashing, prematurely, to the ground.

And so, even though the A.N.C.'s stated precondition of "peace before negotiation" is yet to be met, talks have begun in earnest. The country's de facto parliament is the Convention for a Democratic South Africa, or Codesa, a multiparty gathering that is currently at work trying to find consensus on plans for a transitional government and a new constitution. Codesa is also looking at the issue of reincorporating the independent homelands, and its eighteen participants include not only representatives of the A.N.C., the ruling National Party, the A.N.C.-aligned South African Communist Party and the antiapartheid parliamentary Democratic Party but also the whole Punch-and-Judy show of government puppets: the bantustan governments and the political parties in the "colored" House of Representatives and the Indian House of Delegates.

Codesa's Declaration of Intent binds all participants in a "solemn commitment" to "bring about an undivided South Africa" and "work to heal the divisions of the past" by creating "a climate conducive to peaceful constitutional change," setting in motion the process of drawing up and establishing a democratic constitution, and putting into place a transitional government.

Certainly, there are reluctant participants within Codesa: Both Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Inkatha Freedom Party and Chief Lucas Mangope's Bophuthatswana government, for example, claim to be committed to negotiations but refused to sign the declaration. Both are clearly playing for time. And there is major division between the A.N.C. and the National Party as to what a transitional government should look like and what it should do.

But the overriding South African dialectic at the moment does not exist within Codesa; rather, it is between "insiders" and "outsiders," the players not in the Convention. The latter

ILLUSTRATIONS BY FRANCES JETTER

Mark Gevisser, a freelance writer based in Johannesburg, writes regularly for The Weekly Mail.

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THE A.N.C.'s MANY VOICES

What should the African National Congress be: a bottom-up mass movement in which decisions are made according to the time-consuming principles of popular democracy, or a top-down political party, powered by visionary leaders? And how, after the collapse of the Berlin wall, is the A.N.C. to negotiate itself through the killing fields of economic policy?

These two dilemmas have been brought to a head in the past month by a dispute between Nelson Mandela and other leaders of the movement, most notably Secretary General Cyril Ramaphosa. At issue is not only whether capitalism, socialism or some mixture thereof is to be the way but who, in the A.N.C., is to make the decisions: the "people" or the "leaders." While some in the A.N.C. believe that popular sympathy for it can be transformed into hard support only if the movement abides by rigid principles of mass participation and accountability, others feel that, until it can transform itself into a streamlined and efficient political party, the congress will be impeded at the negotiating table, for it is proving to be an uncoordinated being spouting many contradictory wisdoms.

In his notoriously autocratic style, Mandela has, in the past couple of weeks, made pronouncements on economic policy that are at odds with the decisions of his movement. While the A.N.C. has stated at home that it is still investigating the issue of nationalization, Mandela abroad has all but unveiled a blueprint for a mixed economy that might be sensible, but that is nevertheless his personal opinion rather than that of the movement. And while Ramaphosa, Mandela's de facto second-in-command, has bluntly announced that an A.N.C. government will not necessarily be responsible for paying back foreign debts incurred by the apartheid regime, Mandela took the opportunity earlier this month, at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, to assure potential investors of exactly the opposite.

Not surprisingly, A.N.C. supporters in South Africa are confused. And even though the other liberation movements, the Pan-Africanist Congress and the Azanian People's Organization, have little demonstrable support at the moment, they are positioning themselves, outside the negotiating hall, to soak up the fallout.

If the A.N.C., led by moderates like Mandela and Thabo Mbeki, goes for a mixed economy with mild nationalization, the P.A.C./Azapo camp will find itself with a windfall of malcontents. If, on the other hand, it goes the route of barely reconstructed Communist Party socialism, it will not only lose the confidence of white capital at home and investors abroad but will find itself swimming against the tide of history.

Certainly, the issue is about which approach is better for South Africa. But it is also about which is better for the A.N.C. M.G.

are the ones who could do most damage to the process—the growing far right, ranging from the parliamentary Conservative Party to the neo-Nazi Afrikaner separatist armies, and the left-wing liberation movements, the Pan-Africanist Congress and the Azanian People's Organization.

It is not surprising, then, that Codesa's primary participants, the A.N.C. and the Nationalist government, are desperate to show that their policies of negotiating a settlement are working: If negotiations fail, both will lose a portion of their constituencies—the National Party to the right and the A.N.C. to the left. And so, despite murders on the *platteland*, torchings in the townships and two visions for South Africa that are still irreconcilable, the A.N.C. and the government have both compromised to the point that they are at least talking the same language.

The A.N.C. built its support on images of resistance: the guerrilla with an AK-47 in his arms, the demonstrator with an angry fist raised above her head, the seething hero behind bars. But now, as the liberation movement moves from the moral high ground of armed struggle to the more tempered realm of the conference hall, it has had to fashion for itself a new image: the savvy negotiator. And so it is developing a *Realpolitik* that reassesses much of its previously nonnegotiable policy.

At its critical July conference last year, for example, the democratically elected delegates were adamant that their movement would not sit down and talk until certain "preconditions for negotiation" had been met. They were: peace in the townships, the release of all political prisoners and the return of all exiles. But the A.N.C.'s more pragmatic leaders have come to realize that the present government is unwilling (or, more likely, unable) to institute these, and that only an interim government—in which the National Party is no longer the referee but simply a player—can do so. It has thus decided to commence negotiations before the preconditions have been met.

The A.N.C. has also realized, for the first time, that if it is to espouse a negotiated settlement rather than a revolution, it has to recognize the currently existing organs of power, for only those organs have the right—illegitimate as this right may be—to transfer power. Because the A.N.C. has agreed to participate in a constitutional transfer of power, it is forced today to recognize yesterday's avowed enemies. And this means dealing with the "collaborators." At the December inauguration of Codesa, many A.N.C. members were appalled at the convoy of Mercedes-Benzes that rolled up to deposit their corpulent cargoes at the door. But the A.N.C.'s agreement to negotiate with the bantustan and tricameral leaders, and Mandela's personal decision to woo them, have paid off. With the troubling exceptions of Buthelezi and Mangope, the A.N.C. has won over the very people it once decried, and its camp is in the majority at Codesa. Ironically, the government—which created these tin-pot leaders—is finding itself more and more isolated.

If the movement's demagogues are reluctant to accede to the de facto recognition of an illegitimate regime and the courtship of its puppets, they are even more loath to admit to another major shift in the A.N.C.'s thinking: the realiza-

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tion that it simply does not have the wherewithal to begin governing immediately.

There is, among the A.N.C.'s pragmatists, a lesson to be learned in the recent downfall of the movement's greatest patron, Zambia's former president Kenneth Kaunda. Africa has shown time and again that an effective resistance movement does not necessarily make a competent government. And, if the bloody months since February 1990 have proved one thing to the A.N.C., it is that it has neither the skills nor the resources needed to administer a country devastated by economic repression and destabilized by endemic violence. This awareness has paved the way for negotiations around an interim government in which power is shared rather than transferred or seized.

But since it is the government—and not the A.N.C.—that has everything to lose and little to gain in a new dispensation, it has been, more than anything, the shift in President de Klerk's thinking that has made meaningful negotiation possible. He has finally accepted the inevitability of a transitional government in which power is shared, perhaps because he realizes—like the A.N.C.—that his party cannot manage the transition alone.

He has made another major concession to the A.N.C. as well, acknowledging in his speeches to Codesa and Parliament the need for a democratically elected body to write South Africa's new constitution. While the government previously wanted Codesa to do this, it is now calling for elections as soon as possible, to put a transitional government into power that will formulate a constitution and manage the country. This shift might well be born of political expedience rather than good faith. The government's unexpected isolation in Codesa has made it see that it will have little power if the Convention becomes the government, so it is possibly hoping to institute a transitional regime in which it will be guaranteed a greater share of power.

Certainly, de Klerk's proposals for a transitional authority are convoluted and muddy; they call for a bicameral parliament with entrenched "rights for political minorities" (which still sounds alarmingly like "group rights" and "white veto") and shared rule that could last for up to twelve years. The A.N.C. may be right in suspecting the government of a decade-long filibuster; of getting South Africa into a shared-rule transitional arrangement and then leaving it to languish there. This way, the government can hold on to some power for as long as possible—at least until it can put its much-vaunted "front" of whites, tribal authorities, conservative blacks, "coloreds" and Indians together—before allowing the country to progress to simple majoritarian rule.

For this reason, the A.N.C. is adamant that a transitional government be formed for an expressly limited period—no more than eighteen months—to create a "level playing field" for the Constituent Assembly, which is to be elected from a single voters' roll according to the simple rule of proportional representation. And South Africa's new constitution, the A.N.C. continues, must be written by this Constituent Assembly and not by a transitional government.

But, comments senior A.N.C. constitutional architect and negotiator Mohammed Valli Moosa, "even though our models for an interim government are widely divergent, at least we both agree on the need for some transitional measure and for the constitution to be written by some democratically elected body. It's not two different worlds anymore. At least a common path can be found."

Both de Klerk and Mandela are presenting the rosy picture of a transitional regime by the end of the year. But there are pitfalls that cannot be avoided as easily as de Klerk and Mandela would have us believe: the issue of a whites-only referendum, the threat of the white right, the radical divergence in constitutional models for a future beyond the transition, the obstructionism of Chiefs Buthelezi and Mangope.

And South Africa's tragedy is the following: The longer it takes to overcome these stumbling blocks, the deeper this land will sink into the often mindless violence that always accompanies transitional instability. □

To be continued.

CONDONING THE LEGAL STUFF?

Hard Sell in The Drug War

CYNTHIA COTTS

"This is your brain on drugs," goes the fried-egg ad. "Any questions?" After seeing the ad, some teenagers have stopped taking drugs—and some 4-year-olds have stopped eating eggs. "Fried Egg" is one of hundreds of ads released under the imprimatur of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. Launched in 1986 in New York City, this nonprofit group uses advertising to reduce the demand for illegal drugs. It's a flashy concept, but, as "Fried Egg" demonstrates, propaganda can breed misconceptions.

The Partnership means well, but it sends a self-serving message. The ads themselves exaggerate and distort, relying on scare tactics to get people's attention. Ad strategies are based on market research rather than public health policy. Even worse, the Partnership has accepted $5.4 million in contributions from legal drug manufacturers, while producing ads that overlook the dangers of tobacco, alcohol and pills. This "drug-free" crusade is actually a silent partner to the drug industry, condoning the use of "good" drugs by targeting only the "bad" ones.

Of course, the pharmaceutical and advertising industries have long been intertwined. James Burke, who resigned as chairman and C.E.O. of Johnson & Johnson in 1989 to become chairman of the Partnership, is no stranger to marketing. In the mid-1980s, he engineered a classic campaign to restore public confidence in Tylenol after the cyanide scare. A few years later, Johnson & Johnson sued Bristol-Myers Squibb for claiming in its advertising that Aspirin-Free

Cynthia Cotts writes about drug policy.

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Excedrin is a better pain reliever than Extra-Strength Tylenol. At the Partnership, Burke has implemented a concept borrowed from the pharmaceutical industry: If ads can sell drugs, they can unsell them, too.

More than 100 agencies have made Partnership ads pro bono, and the media kick in ad space and airtime for free. The incentive? Creative directors get to show off, giving their ads titles like "Candy Store" and "Tricks of the Trade" and submitting them for industry awards. The actors involved get exposure, and the media outlets can pat themselves on the back for contributing to a good cause.

Typically, Partnership ads are melodramatic. They trade on scare tactics (the school-bus driver snorts coke) and stereotypes (black boys sell crack in the schoolyard). With their hard line on marijuana, Partnership ads revive an old message: One puff, and you're hooked. Dr. Gil Botven, who studies drug abuse prevention programs at Cornell Medical College, thinks "what the Partnership is doing is great." But, he adds, "scare tactics have never been demonstrated to be effective."

Partnership spokeswoman Theresa Grant doesn't like the term "scare tactics." "We feel it's appropriate to arouse people's attention," she says. A recent print ad shows a preteen in a denim jacket under the headline, "What she's going through isn't a phase. It's an ounce a week." The ad copy alerts parents to the dangers of pot smoking, and in doing so, it exaggerates slightly—not many 10-year-olds could afford an ounce of marijuana a week, let alone smoke it and stay on their feet. When questioned about the exaggeration, Grant said the ad had just come under review. A few weeks later, the "Not Just a Phase" girl was back, taking up a full page in *The New York Times*.

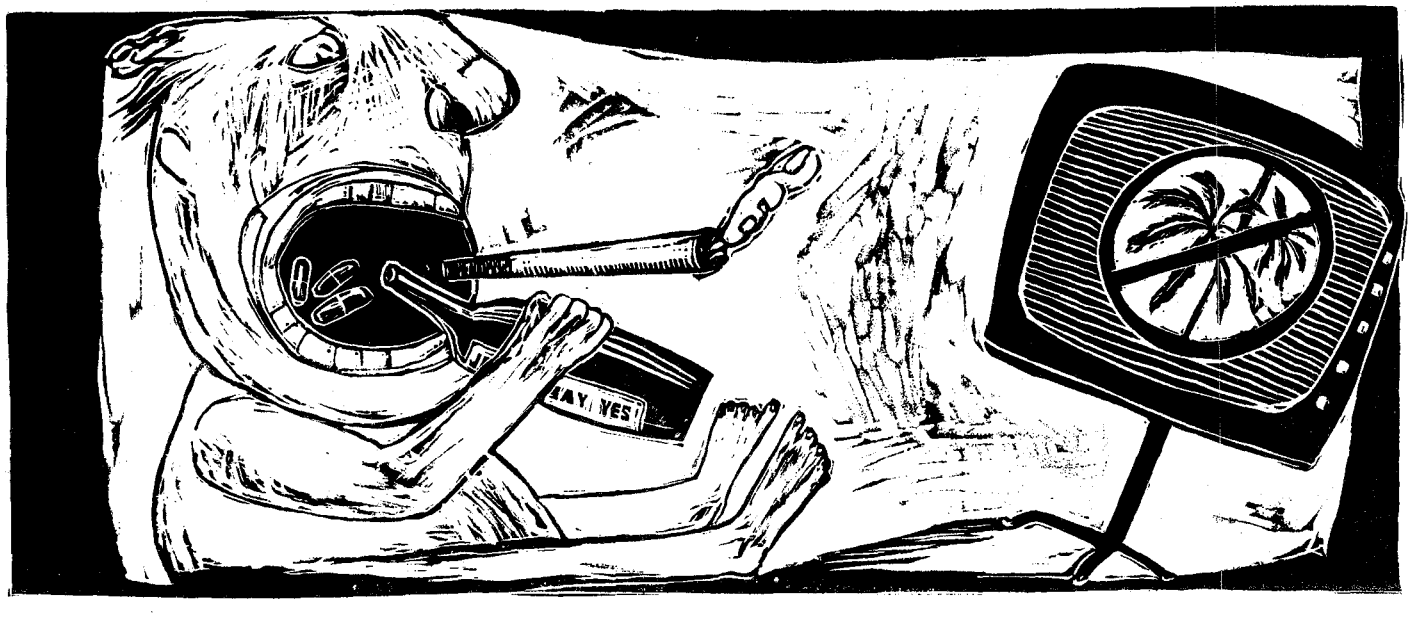
Fact checking is a sensitive issue for the Partnership. They've caught so much flak over the years for inaccuracies that the review process has been overhauled; now, the factual content of all ads is scrutinized before they're produced. The first screamer was a 1987 TV ad depicting the brain wave of a 14-year-old smoking pot. It was actually the brain wave of a coma patient. In 1990 *Scientific American* uncovered some cooked figures in a cocaine ad. Those early mistakes were really "born of naïveté," says Grant. "Nobody intentionally distorted facts. In those days, they really thought they had the kind of substantiation they needed."

A 1990 print ad reels off marijuana slang terms and concludes, "No matter what you call it, don't call it harmless." The ad cites potential damage to the lungs and reproductive system. But calls to the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (N.I.D.A.) didn't turn up any casualties, just a lot of inconclusive studies. One study did find "reduced gas exchange capacity" in the lungs of fifteen women who were chronic pot smokers. As for reproductive risks, scientists have injected a lot of pregnant monkeys with THC, the key psychoactive chemical in marijuana, but they've yet to come up with hard evidence. In fact, the health issue is "nebulous," Grant concedes, so the Partnership is switching its tack on marijuana. Future ads won't tell you it's dangerous, just that it's uncool.

Like its mentors in the pharmaceutical industry, the Partnership has learned to backpedal. In the fall of 1990 the campaign sent ads to Alaskans for a Drug-Free Youth, a parent group that was campaigning to put recriminalization of marijuana on the ballot. Recriminalization was passed that November, and the Partnership crowed about the victory in its Winter 1991 newsletter.

When asked about the Partnership's effort, Grant denies a political motive. "It wasn't any different than if we provided messages to a community group in Iowa," she says. "I must be remiss, because I never looked at it from the perspective of assisting in a political campaign."

To maintain its good reputation, the Partnership has to offer hard proof of advertising's impact on drug abuse. So, even though experts have concluded that media campaigns do not in themselves change behavior, Burke goes around trumpeting the power of the media to save children from drugs. Burke is echoed by Mathea Falco, a former Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics Matters, who is now writing a book on drug prevention programs. The Partnership's greatest achievement, says Falco, is to convey the message



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"that using drugs is silly. They're making it socially unacceptable, and that's the best way to bring about social change."

No one can prove that the ads are responsible for declining drug use, or indeed that all drug use is down. The latest government surveys show a rise in the use of cocaine and heroin by urban youth, and in the use of LSD by college students nationwide.

When he needs proof Burke can quote the Partnership Attitude Tracking Survey (PATS), conducted annually at the Partnership's behest by the Gordon S. Black Corporation. The PATS research suggests a correlation between teens who have seen the antidrug ads, teens who disapprove of drug use and teens who say no to drugs. But when Burke cites PATS, he doesn't mention that Gordon Black is a market research firm, or that PATS is based on "mall intercepts." That is, participants fill out questionnaires anonymously at shopping malls in sample locations. Confidentiality is thus guaranteed, but accuracy is not.

The Partnership ignores cigarettes, alcohol and pills.

At the University of Michigan, Dr. Lloyd Johnston, a research scientist, conducts an annual survey of high school students for N.I.D.A. According to Johnston, the mall intercepts are an inexpensive method of measuring trends, but they lack the sampling precision of a household survey. Nonetheless, Johnston's surveys do bolster the PATS conclusions. Most teens remember the antidrug ads and report being influenced by them. "There's no guarantee advertising did it per se," says Johnston, "but it's clear things have moved in the right direction."

The PATS five-year summary reports that illegal drug use by students is dropping, but fails to mention that tobacco and alcohol are still teenagers' drugs of choice. Johnston's latest statistics show that 40 percent of tenth graders report drinking within the past month and getting very drunk within the past year. "The other thing that comes out of our surveys," says Johnston, "is that smoking has not dropped among young people for almost a decade." Nineteen percent of high school seniors are daily tobacco smokers, and hundreds of thousands of them, Johnston sadly predicts, will die of lung cancer one day.

The Partnership has traditionally attacked marijuana, cocaine and crack, drugs deemed widely available to schoolchildren. But if the Partnership's mission is to stop kids from experimenting in the first place, why not go after cigarettes and beer? The answer is obvious. According to Falco, "It would be *suicidal* if the Partnership took on the alcohol and tobacco industries. The Partnership is living off free advertising product and space, and the media and ad agencies live off alcohol and tobacco advertising." Theresa Grant acknowledges that the decision to focus on illegal drugs was "pragmatic," based on the desire to "get the airtime and space and not alienate the people who are making this possible."

The Partnership's condoning of legal drugs doesn't bother Falco. "The message may not be complete," she chirps, "but it's better than nothing!" Many public health researchers, however, are concerned about a new generation of teens who smoke, drink and pop pills.

Experts believe that children begin using drugs in the order of availability, and they're more likely to try marijuana if they've already tried alcohol and cigarettes. "The natural thing in a prevention campaign," says Dr. Botven, "would be to focus on the three gateway substances: alcohol, tobacco and marijuana. The Partnership starts with marijuana, and my concern is they're skipping the most important ones in terms of fatality." Johnston believes the Partnership has the ability to target legal drug abuse, and says he "would be delighted if they would." When asked if he thinks that could happen, he pauses. "A betting man would say no."

In the Partnership's early days, its primary supporter was the American Association of Advertising Agencies. That group knew better than to alienate the legal drug industry. But the mandate must have been reinforced in 1989, the year Burke came from Johnson & Johnson, bringing with him a $3 million grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, a prominent health care philanthropy. The foundation described its unusually handsome grant to the Partnership as "pivotal in leveraging . . . support from other private foundations."

On cue, the other foundations rolled over. In 1989 and 1990, the ten largest foundation grants for alcohol and drug abuse totaled $12.4 million. The Partnership took $4.7 million from that pool, or 38 percent. Many an individual donor gave its largest antidrug grant to the Partnership. In other words, the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation accelerated a trend: the channeling of foundation money into public awareness, which is considered a less effective form of drug-abuse prevention than school- and community-based programs.

The Partnership's funders are usually kept secret, says Grant, to protect them from other grant seekers and from the legalization lobby. But the Partnership's 1991 tax return reveals another motive for secrecy: conspicuous support from the legal drug industry. From 1988 to 1991, pharmaceutical companies and their beneficiaries contributed as follows: the J. Seward Johnson, Sr., Charitable Trusts ($1,100,000); Du Pont ($150,000); the Procter & Gamble Fund ($120,000); the Bristol-Myers Squibb Foundation ($110,000); Johnson & Johnson ($110,000); SmithKline Beecham ($100,000); the Merck Foundation ($75,000); and Hoffman-La Roche ($50,000).

Pharmaceuticals and their beneficiaries alone donated 54 percent of the $5.8 million the Partnership took from its top twenty-five contributors from 1988 to 1991. That 54 percent is conservative. It doesn't include donations under $90,000, and it doesn't include donations from the tobacco and alcohol kings: The Partnership has taken $150,000 each from Philip Morris, Anheuser-Busch and RJR Reynolds, plus $100,000 from American Brands (Jim Beam, Lucky Strike).

Coincidence? Hardly. The war on drugs is a war on illegal drugs, and the Partnership's benefactors have a huge stake in keeping it that way. They know that when schoolchildren learn that marijuana and crack are evil, they're also learning that alcohol, tobacco and pills are as American as apple pie. □

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DEATH AND REMEMBRANCE

Open Letter to Salman Rushdie

February 14 was the third anniversary of the Ayatollah Khomeini's decree ordering the murder of Salman Rushdie because of "blasphemy" in his novel The Satanic Verses. *A consortium of writers and human rights groups is trying to sponsor a paperback edition of the novel, but they want more support from publishers. The following open letter to Rushdie was a response to his surprise appearance in New York City last December.* —*The Editors*

FLORENCE MILLER

Your address to a forum of journalists at Columbia University was sad and troubling. You described yourself drifting alone in a wounded balloon above a bottomless chasm. There are nights when dreams like that scare me awake, leaving me cold and full of dread. So far, my morning has always come. Will yours, you wonder? "What is my single life worth?" you ask, and surely you shiver when despair whispers, "Not a lot."

Well, what can we expect from despair? Not a lot! Listen. Go fix yourself something hot to drink and settle in where it's warm and comfortable. I'm going to tell you a story.

A few years ago, I worked as part-time guidance counselor in a small parochial elementary school in East Harlem, New York. The school got a windfall—money to run a summer day camp with jobs for ten neighborhood teenagers. More than sixty applied for the jobs, putting the staff in an awkward bind. All the applicants had attended the school at one time or another. The teachers remembered them as uniformed fifth and sixth graders, but what to make of these enormous, sexy, noisy, extravagant 15- and 16-year-olds? Which ten to choose? Who were the most worthy?

Graduate school graduates all, the teachers drew up a checklist—sensitivity, respect for others, motivation, leadership quality, need—looked it over and burst out laughing. Neediness was a given. All the applicants were needy. As for the rest, finding a dependable way to identify those fine characteristics would take more time than anyone had to give, and even then, so what? Checklists, like despair, don't offer much latitude.

So, being sensible women, they tossed the list and made a new plan. The teachers and the teenagers would spend a Saturday together getting reacquainted. It would have a name—Summer Job Orientation Day—and would include socializing, traditional group exercises, discussions, questions and answers. The teachers would lead some groups, drop in on others, keep their eyes open and next day, at breakfast in the convent, they'd decide on the kids they thought needed the jobs most and who appeared likely to work responsibly. Perfect.

That was in December. The famous Saturday was scheduled for March, and it was a March Saturday all right. Gray, rainy, dark. A day for reading, stretched out on the living-room couch and peacefully falling asleep during the Met Opera broadcast. I could hardly wait.

Disaster one. Sister Madeleine broke her ankle late Friday afternoon in the gym. Could I please fill in for her? Ciao, *Tosca*!

Disaster two. What with all that sensitivity and attention to relevant criteria, no one remembered to tell the custodian to keep the heat up for Saturday, so the school, always a little moist, was inhospitably cold and dank.

Disaster three. Eighty kids, not sixty, showed up. The word had spread and then, as now, decent summer jobs were pure gold in East Harlem. "Never mind you don't have an application," parents must have insisted. "You just be there. The sisters won't throw you out." Having solved the problem of shall there be six groups of ten or ten groups of six, there was all that math to do over and worse, not enough chairs. The kindergarten was, of course, the only classroom we could get into, and the mood soured as we realized we would be either sitting knees to chin all day long in those miserable little chairs or dealing with "I don't sit in no baby chair. No way!" We could have predicted. . . .

Disaster four. Heriberto! He had attended the school briefly but memorably in fourth grade. He was now about 17, living with a friend in the neighborhood because his family had thrown him out. He was thin, drawn tight, radioactive. Theresa opened the first large group session at 9:30. At five to 10, Heriberto came in, carrying an economy-size bag of potato chips. He greeted his friends one by one, eyed and dismissed Theresa without interest, elaborately embraced a couple of the girls and came to rest on the back of a kindergarten chair, teetering not quite all the way back to the wall. Yo, Heriberto!

The morning went according to plan, more or less. Some groups were lively, others dull. Heriberto and his potato chips were a royal pain wherever they were but that was to be expected. Everyone perked up when the pizzas were delivered at noon. Hot and cheesy, they tasted wonderful in that icy building, and lunchtime was a cheerful mess of greasy napkins, laughter and screeching remember-whens. The afternoon wasn't too bad and I considered forgiving Madeleine for breaking her ankle. My last small group was to do the "bomb shelter" exercise, and then we would all go home.

The bomb shelter exercise runs as follows: War has been declared. The city will be bombed. A nearby shelter offers safety. Ten people rush to the shelter but there is room inside for only five. Who will live and who will die? The ten are: a doctor, female; a pregnant woman; a retired general, male; a farmer, male; an artist, female; a construction worker, male; a schoolboy, male; a housewife; a historian, female; a priest. The group has half an hour to discuss the problem, agree unanimously on who survives, then select a representative to present and defend the decision when all the small groups reassemble for a final meeting.

I had led the exercise many times before and knew that the doctor and the general would be first into the shelter. They always were. Proponents of the pregnant woman would be

Florence Miller worked for thirty-five years as a teacher and counselor in New York City's schools.

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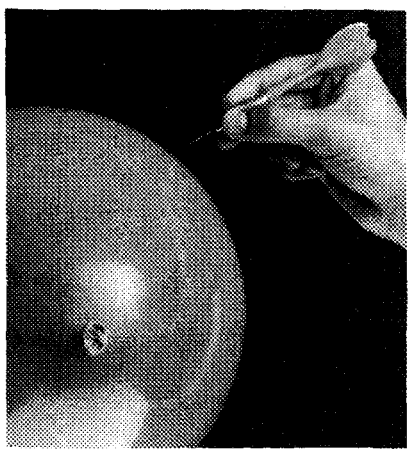

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challenged by "She could lose the baby and die, right?" There would be a miniseries romance between the shy, handsome construction worker and the beautiful, abandoned housewife. (Don't ask me. It never fails.) "He can build them a house after." "But what if, ya know, one of them can't make babies." "He'll do it with the doctor but he'll always love her the best." The priest and the farmer would be last pick, the odds favoring the farmer. The artist, the historian and the schoolboy would be left to the bombs. They always were.

The discussion was engrossing. The meaning of survival was everyday reality to these young people. They knew more than necessary about life and death, violent death, random death, unfair death, youthful death. Even Heriberto's sauntering late entrance didn't interrupt the flow of passionate opinion and advocacy. I called time for the first vote. Ten votes each for the doctor and the general; odds and ends for the construction worker, the housewife, the pregnant woman, the farmer and the priest. One vote for the historian.

Heriberto! Some in the group laughed. Others, including me, were annoyed. Come on, Heriberto. It's been a long day. Grow up. But Heriberto wasn't playing. He seemed genuinely astonished that his was the only vote for the historian. His reasons? "Because." Nidia, a formidable young woman, took the floor to tell him that she had no time for nonsense (she didn't use the word "nonsense"), that the vote had to be unanimous, that the next vote would be the last vote and that he'd better vote the right way. Another poll and again, one vote for the historian.

We could hear other groups breaking up and going toward the lunchroom for the last meeting of the day. One of the girls—I don't remember her name—was tearful. She had to be at her supermarket job by 5, and she wanted her fair chance at this summer job. She looked my way for backup but, fortunately, I kept my mouth shut as Heriberto began to explain his choice. The historian has to survive, he said. Someone must keep a record of what happens in the world. Someone has to write it all down so that people will know what happened before them. If it isn't written down, it will be forgotten and that would be terrible and wrong. People's lives must never be forgotten.

That isn't exactly what he said, but it's close. He had no golden tongue; he stumbled, mumbled, cleared his throat and repeated himself. It took a while to disconnect Heriberto of the potato chips from this earnest young man trying to persuade us that remembrance is an obligation and slowly, slowly, we understood. At a quarter to 4, just a little behind schedule, the historian got into the shelter.

This is a true story, so it doesn't end with Heriberto's triumphant address to the final assembly and greater glory to come. It was Nidia who represented the group and she was terrific, relishing the moment and gracefully crediting Heriberto with the substance of the case for the historian. Sometime during the crush of goodbyes, Heriberto told Sheila, the principal, that he hadn't come for the job, only to hang out with his friends, and that he wouldn't be around that summer. He drifted away and I don't know what happened to him. I do, however, remember him clearly and so, following his instruction, I wrote it all down so that you can remember him too. □

BEAT THE DEVIL.

(*Continued From Page 295*)

too heavily on eyewitness testimony. The problem is that people will testify to damn near anything. So the commission had one eyewitness testifying that he saw Oswald sticking a rifle through the sixth-floor window——

AC: *But there was another witness next to him who saw Oswald and another man beside him.*

WJL: Right. That's the problem. The only way you can avoid that is to look at evidence that can be replicated. Evidence that is here today, will be here tomorrow and 100 years from now: the autopsy photographs; the autopsy X-rays; the ballistics tests. The bullet that was found on the stretcher was fired from Oswald's rifle to the exclusion of all other rifles; the two big fragments in the car were fired from that rifle to the exclusion of all other rifles; that rifle was on the sixth floor of the School Book Depository; it had Oswald's print on it; there was a brown paper bag there that had Oswald's palm print on it; it was a long bag that would have held a rifle. At this point it would be nice to have an eyewitness who said that when he gave Oswald a ride to work that morning he had the bag with him, and there was one. But fine, never mind how the bag got there. We know it was Oswald's rifle because he rented a post office box and his handwriting is on the application; he ordered the rifle and his handwriting is on the paper he ordered the rifle with; he wrote out a money order and his handwriting is on that; and the rifle was sent to his post office box. There are a number of pictures of Oswald with a rifle. The House Assassination Committee, with improved enhancement techniques that the Warren Commission didn't have, was able to prove it was the same rifle. The negative was found and it had been taken from Oswald's camera to the exclusion of all other cameras. George de Mohrenschildt had a copy of that picture with Oswald's handwriting on the back. There's no evidence of tampering on the negative; the scratch marks are the same. The picture was taken six months before the assassination. We have photographic evidence, like the Zapruder film. On the Tippit shooting, we've got forensic evidence that shows clearly Tippit was killed by bullets from the gun Oswald was carrying when he was arrested. So you can make out a pretty good case just on the basis of the physical evidence.

Why did Oswald kill the President? The man was a malcontent, not happy, not stupid by any stretch of the imagination, but unhappy and discontented. I guess your typical liberal [laughs]. Not that. I guess he would have as much contempt for liberals as you or I. He was a revolutionary of one form or another. I drafted a psychological profile of Oswald for chapter seven of the report. It was reviewed by a panel including the chief of psychiatry at the Mayo Clinic, who threw my draft down and said, "This is very interesting stuff, but it tells me a lot more about you, Liebeler, than it does about Oswald." So how the hell do I know why Oswald killed the President?

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

Whither Western Civilization?

RUSSELL JACOBY

DEBATING P.C.: The Controversy Over Political Correctness on College Campuses. *Edited by Paul Berman. Laurel/Dell. 338 pp. Paper $8.*

Since no one defends "political correctness," debating P.C. is perplexing. It's like debating tyranny. Are there two sides? The issue may be: Is there a left on American campuses that dominates courses and speech? This would be bizarre. Almost everywhere on the globe, a demoralized left reels from defeats, usually deserved. Almost everyone touts market capitalism as the future. The planet itself oscillates to the right. However, on American campuses a cultural left supposedly runs the show; conservatives and traditionalists tremble. One outfit has set up an 800 number for beleaguered campus conservatives to report leftist misdeeds. "Hello! This is Eddie, Young Conservatives, Ann Arbor chapter. I'm in the student union. A band of multiculturalists just mugged a Shakespeare scholar. . . . Yes, I can hold."

The conservative vision may be bizarre, but it is possible. Perhaps a left that has been thrashed everywhere else gathers on American campuses for its last stand, and perhaps that left is dogmatic. A left-wing fondness for self-righteous dogmatism can hardly be doubted. I used to call one endearing group anarcho-Stalinists; they were anarchists who hated authority and dogma, and they were fundamentally authoritarian and dogmatic: psychic Stalinists. (For more information I refer to my, alas, unpublished and now obsolete "Everything You Wanted to Know About Sects, but Were Afraid to Ask: A Complete Guide to Leftist Splits and Fusions.") These folks are still around; now they teach literature.

But are they dangerous—to students or education? Conservatives are certain: Western civilization is succumbing to the new academics. "The new barbarians," Hilton Kramer writes, are not simply at the gate, they have taken over the classrooms, buildings and faculty club. "This barbarian element—so hostile to the fundamental tenets of our civilization . . . now commands an immense following in our mainstream institutions. It has already radically transformed the teaching of the arts and humanities in our colleges and universities." Our culture is "in deep and terrible trouble."

Traumatized by the sixties, conservatives still sleep badly; campus Maoists and Black Panthers people their dreams. Arguments won't help; they need sedatives. It seems pointless to weigh the record. Incidents in which the left has manhandled (personhandled?) "incorrect" students or professors are scarce; most cases evaporate the closer they are examined [see Jon Wiener, "What Happened at Harvard," September 30, 1991]. The few that exist often take the form of some students yelling about something or against someone. It may be offensive and wrong and stupid, but where is the threat to campus life? The oft-attacked multicultural curriculum reforms affect only a few courses at a few schools.

Inasmuch as they exalt the university and its progress, cultural leftists are conservatives.

Referring to the flimsy evidence, an academic left enthusiastically blasts conservatives. The standard argument: Hysteria about a left campus McCarthyism has been whipped up by the right wing and circulated by sympathetic media. There is no there there. However, this three-quarter truth feeds leftist deception and self-promotion. Not only is political conformism a bogus issue, the university left contends that campus life and culture have never been better: more diverse, exciting, subversive. Doubters are rank reactionaries who pine for the days of lynching.

After a century of denouncing bourgeois culture, the left still worships progress; after fifty years of criticizing vulgar Marxism, it still loves parading into the future. "*Postindustrial, postmodern, post-structuralist, postcolonial, postfeminist, post-Marxist, post-Gutenberg. . . .* We are establishing new patterns of a common culture, new global economic and communications systems." Catharine R. Stimpson in her remarks to the Modern Language Association sounds like a TV executive celebrating a world market. This feature of the debate on P.C. and multiculturalism goes unmentioned: Inasmuch as they exalt the university and its progress, cultural leftists are conservatives. Fundamentally they are cheerleaders. "Precisely because we've done so much to recover some of the West's suppressed heterogeneities," counsels Michael Berubé, "we cannot stand mutely by," watching the conservative "academy's attackers." Note "we" are defending our academy; these radicals love the establishment (and themselves).

Of course, any statement about any position must be qualified, since no unanimity exists. If some academics find only a conservative conspiracy thwarting their righteous work, others are more reflective. Edward Said, the *Nation* columnist, considers a lecture that provoked a very hostile response; a black woman professor bitterly protested that Said, a Palestinian-American, cited only white European males in the first thirteen pages of his paper about cultural imperialism. "How could you do such a thing?" Said goes on to ponder the dangers of an impoverished idea of nationalism; he questions reducing ethnic identity to invoking approved texts and individuals.

Do this professor's objections constitute P.C.? If so, it is important to see what it is not: It is not a subpoena to testify before a committee; it is not a threat of unemployment. It is simply a single individual asking a hostile question. This incident, however, rings true; similar events regularly occur, suggesting something awry in university life. What matters is less what is said than who says it.

You don't have to be a conservative to know where this leads, but it may help. Thought takes a back seat to proportional representation. Culture is tagged and filed by gender, religion, nationality, ethnicity, race. Of course, this makes things simple; only a checklist is necessary to evaluate a lecture or book. Need it be said? This approach yields at least two serious problems. It fosters utter relativism inasmuch as nothing is valid beyond the expression of a group. And it may abet the murder-

Russell Jacoby is the author of The Last Intellectuals *(Noonday) and other works. He is currently writing a book about higher education for Doubleday/Anchor.*

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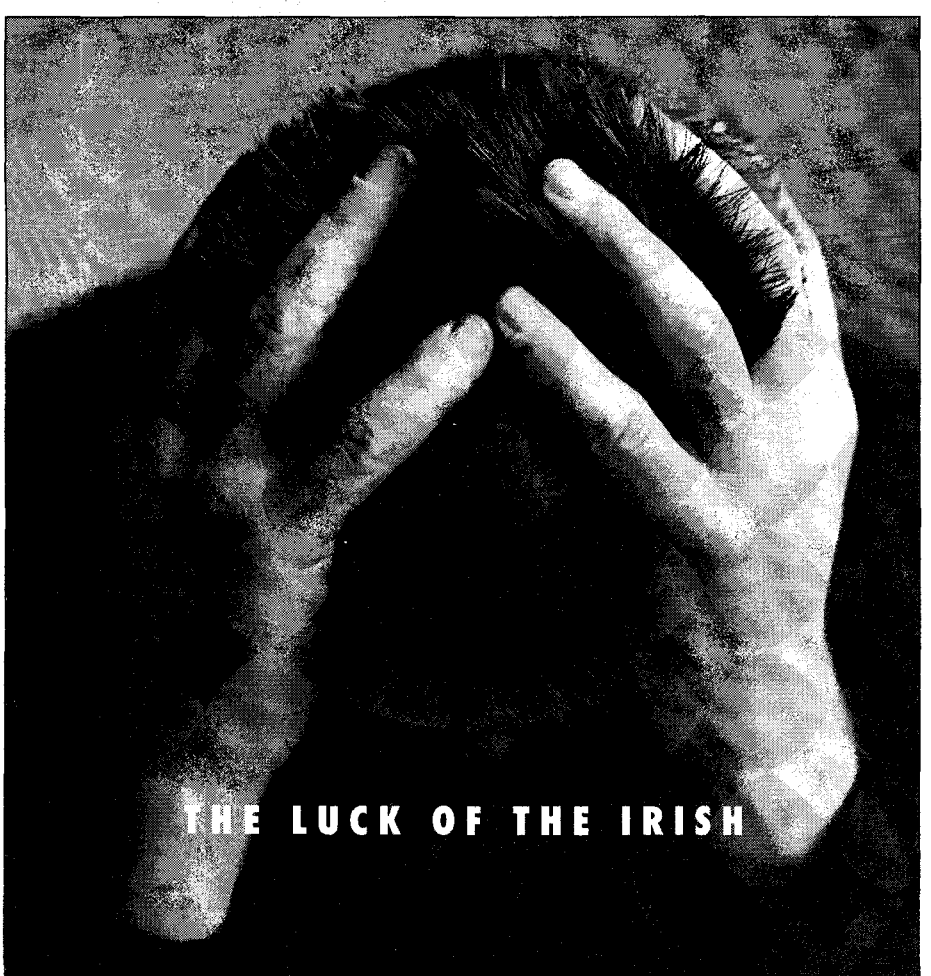
ous decline of society into warring ethnic and racial groups.

Some happy multiculturalists see no evil; everyone simply wants a place in the society and curriculum. Paula Rothenberg, who edited a controversial multicultural anthology, seeks to enlarge the curriculum. Fine. "And what of white males' scholarship and perspective in this new and evolving curriculum? Will there be a place for them? The question is absurd. . . . The perspectives and contributions of that group are valid and valuable: there is much to be learned from them. . . . "

Is this the spirit of bureaucratic leftism? Is thinking reduced to crude sociology? White males have one perspective, white females another, black females a third, black Hispanic females a fourth, gay black Hispanic females a fifth—and this only begins the list. At Oberlin, it has been reported, the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Union established four subgroups: Gay Men of Color, Zami (lesbians of color), Lesbians Be Loud and the Gay Men's Rap Group. Every group has its unique interests and perspectives; the individual only represents the group. Scenes from Professsor Group Thought's classroom: "Thank you, Mr. Kafka, for giving us the perspectives of the white male. . . . No, I'm sorry, Mr. Sartre, we have already heard the white male view. . . . That goes for you too, Mr. Lenin, please sit down." Education becomes inverted, a program to promote group stereotypes and false generalizations. Even terms like "Eurocentrism" are objectionable, as if a homogeneous European culture existed—as if Adolf Hitler and Anne Frank represent the same world.



Rolling Stone called Luka Bloom ". . .the inheritor of a particularly Irish mix of mysticism and moonshine, a carousing spirituality that marks musicians as distinct as Van Morrison and U2." He's fun, passionate, a great songwriter. . . and rather handsome, when you can see his face. *Luka's new album, The Acoustic Motorbike features 12 remarkable tracks, including "I Need Love."*

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Paul Berman has collected many recent pieces bearing on "political correctness," campus free speech and multiculturalism. This is undeniably a useful book. My quotations of Kramer, Stimpson, Berubé, Rothenberg and Said come from this volume. *Debating P.C.* allows the uninitiated to reach their own conclusions and the initiated to review the controversy. For anyone looking further or deeper, however, this book will be a disappointment. Berman's selections are narrow and sometimes skewed. If this book looks like you've already read it, you have. Almost every piece comes from *The New Republic* (Irving Howe), *The New York Review of Books* (John Searle), *The Nation* (Katha Pollitt), *American Scholar* (Diane Ravitch), *The New York Times Book Review* (Henry Louis Gates Jr.) or *The Village Voice* (Michael Berubé). Many are fine, but Berman might have looked beyond his mailbox.

He does not include "some of the super-radical positions," enigmatically adding, "which is too bad." If it is too bad, why doesn't he use them? He's the editor. The book ends with a speech from Barbara Ehrenreich to the Socialist Scholars Conference, "The Challenge for the Left." This is a nice but also odd touch. The speech rallies the left, but hardly serves as a broad overview or conclusion.

Berman's editorial restraint seems excessive. More details about the campus "free speech" or multiculturalism controversy would be welcome. The feud lives by virtue of its generalities, but Berman keeps his distance, offering no hard information. On free speech he sticks to basic statements (Nat Hentoff, Stanley Fish), and throughout the book he introduces selections only by identifying the authors. His single foray into specifics is halfhearted. One section deals with the controversy about revamping the English composition course at the University of Texas. Unfortunately, Berman reveals little about the dispute. He tells us that the

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argument partly stemmed from Paula Rothenberg's textbook, *Racism and Sexism*, but doesn't indicate more: what the revised or unrevised course contained, or why this particular dispute is important.

Nor does Berman make up for this editorial laxness with a hard-nosed introduction to the book. He meanders and pokes around. He recounts the intellectual history of the New Left, and improbably concludes that vulgar French thought yielded the P.C. fright. "Political correctness . . . is the fog that arises from American liberalism's encounter with the iceberg of French cynicism." Judicious to a fault, he fails to say much. In fact he is so anxious not to anger that he apologizes to the "many academic people" who may stumble across their names in an "unfriendly" context—not in his introduction, but in the reprinted pieces. "I beg the forgiveness of every one of these people." What is this? One of our few independent writers shuffling before the professors? Berman's introduction is the smog that arises when sunny intentions encounter the exhaust of political controversy.

For some academics things are clear: Conservatives once ranted about the C.P.; now they rant about P.C. Big difference. The belief that leftist commissars run American campuses is doubtless nuts. Yet this easy truth does not mean all is well; something is hardening in university life. Tags and labels seep into its culture. Only to celebrate campus diversity misses the conformity prevalent in each enclave. Everyone is out for themselves and their circle. Is this new? No. Is it worse? Maybe. Yet it should not be supposed that this threatens civilization. Duke the candidate represents a danger, not Duke the university. □

Versing History: The Poetry Of Anna Akhmatova

ELIZABETH TUCKER

REMEMBERING ANNA AKHMATOVA. *By Anatoly Nayman. Holt. 240 pp. $29.95.*

COMPLETE POEMS OF ANNA AKHMATOVA, Vols. I and II. *Translated by Judith Hemschemeyer. Edited by Roberta Reeder. Zephyr. 1,521 pp. $85.*

Shortly before her death in 1966, Anna Akhmatova, vilified by the Soviet authorities for most of her creative life, confided, "A poet is someone to whom nothing can be given and from whom nothing can be taken away." But faced with old age and illness, and overwhelmed by the celebrity that came with the post-Stalin thaw, the giant of twentieth-century Russian poetry quickly crumpled. "Believe me, I would like to go into a convent—it's the only thing I need now," she said in a pained whisper. "If only it were possible."

Born to a maritime engineer in 1889 and steeped in the literature, morals and culture of pre-revolutionary Russia, Akhmatova was denounced as "half-nun, half-harlot" and twice banned from publication by the Communist Party. In the words of Stalin's cultural henchman, Andrei Zhdanov, her work was "empty, aristocratic, drawing-room poetry, lacking in ideas." Despite it all—the Bolsheviks' execution of her first husband, poet Nikolai Gumilyov, her son's odyssey through the gulag and the emigration or death of many contemporaries—Akhmatova remained fiercely patriotic to her country and her language, a pioneer in her art and a beacon for the young and talented.

Anatoly Nayman's *Remembering Anna Akhmatova* breaks new ground in presenting this complicated literary figure and personality. His compelling memoir, written from the perspective of five years as her literary secretary, friend and disciple, is first and foremost—as Joseph Brodsky points out in his fine introduction—by a poet about a poet.

Filled with critiques, the book is also remarkable for its compassion and an honesty that exposes some of Akhmatova's shortcomings. Other memoirists, such as Akhmatova's friend and confidante Lydia Chukovskaya, recorded conversations with an eye to publication, smoothing out the wrinkles. Nayman's book is a refreshing stream of consciousness in which a description of Akhmatova's life, complete with bizarre and complicated relationships, gives way to literary criticism, anecdotes, literary opinions and excoriations, an exploration of her metaphysical beliefs and morals, letters between Akhmatova and Nayman, and back again to the fabric of Akhmatova's poetry—which for her was inseparable from life itself.

Akhmatova, a founder of the unique Acmeist school of poetry that broke with traditional symbolism in favor of clarity, close ties to the earth and an emphasis on European culture, was sometimes capricious, judgmental and narcissistic. She never could make the necessary compromises to really live with anyone and consequently suffered many broken relationships. She was even at a loss as to how to raise her only son, giving him up to her mother-in-law.

In old age, the poet shuttled between St. Petersburg, her nearby cottage at Komarovo and Moscow, living with friends or relatives. She survived on a tiny pension and wore threadbare kimonos or shawls "reminiscent of the flimsy wrappings which are thrown over the finished piece in the sculptor's studio," writes Nayman. Akhmatova did not think it fitting for true artists to live in luxury, and criticized Picasso for sometimes looking like a banker. While she wrote poems on windowsills, she resented Soviet critics who had made cozy lives for themselves, replete with country dachas, on the "bones" of herself and her contemporaries.

The young were attracted to Akhmatova, mainly because of the "authenticity" of her fate and because she was a living symbol of the "connectedness of different periods" in history. Nayman writes that just being with her one felt engulfed by three streams of time—the real time, the time in which Akhmatova lived and which trained her to see historical repetition in everything that went on around her, and the time of "shades" or ghosts that would materialize out of her memory. She had the uncanny ability to "recognize" the distant past of which she was never physically a part and also to predict the disconcerting future.

At the same time, Akhmatova sometimes endowed "trifles . . . with a grandiosity." According to the British philosopher Isaiah Berlin, while she had piercing insight into personalities, she also had a "dogmatic obstinacy in attributing motives and intentions." Among Akhmatova's idées fixes were that Stalin had given orders that she be slowly poisoned and then countermanded them, and that close friend and fellow poet Osip Mandelstam had been so poisoned in a labor camp.

Elizabeth Tucker is a writer living in Princeton, New Jersey.

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These beliefs were intuitive but not altogether senseless. "She was not a visionary, she had, for the most part, a strong sense of reality," says Berlin in an excerpt reprinted in Nayman's book.

Akhmatova was not particularly sentimental and could be brusque with people she considered fools. Constantly pestered for meetings with various literary scholars, she once allowed a visit from an American professor in search of a definition of the proverbial Russian soul. When she couldn't give one, the American retorted that the novelist Fyodor Dostoyevsky knew all about the Russian spirit. "Dostoyevsky knew many things, but not everything," Akhmatova threw back. "He thought, for example, that if you murder someone you become a Raskolnikov [tortured by guilt]. But now we know that you can murder fifty, a hundred people—and then go to the theater in the evening."

Moral principles remained foremost for Akhmatova. She considered many contemporary Soviet poets "little bandits, prostitutes of their gifts and exploiters of public taste." Akhmatova dismissed many a young poet, including Yevgeny Yevtushenko, for triteness and lack of soul.

While many poets capitalized on the vogue that art should speak for the masses, Akhmatova forged her own path through intensely personal poems about love, despair, memory and martyrdom. Poems such as "Requiem"—in which a mother's anguish over her son's imprisonment is forever immortalized in the image of Mary at the foot of the Cross—were to become the true voice of the people. By "turning situations inside out, deflating high style, exalting lowly things, bringing together phenomena which at the first sight could not be compared," Akhmatova drew in both the housewife and the literary connoisseur, says Nayman.

Nayman writes that at one point Akhmatova's creative work became subject to one desire—turning the dead into the living by speaking with the living voice of the dead. Those dead included poet-predecessors whose work she assimilated into her own in order to keep them alive and to confirm her own sense of truth. Her scant personal library contained the Bible, Dante, Shakespeare and Pushkin. Through her work, Akhmatova spoke on behalf of those who could not or had not spoken for themselves, from her parents to her friends to Homer. Her obsession with poetry was partly formed in the crucible of revolution, when it became clear that art was the only hope of salvation.

Through it all—the hungry days of revolution; the dark days of two world wars; evacuation to Tashkent, Uzbekistan; Stalin's terror; and years of poetic silence when she eked out a living translating other poets' works—Akhmatova recalled the Europe she had visited in her youth as in a dream. But she never for an instant considered emigrating. That would have been tantamount to a betrayal of her culture and, above all, the Russian language. When she was finally allowed to travel abroad in the mid-1960s to accept literary prizes, she emerged, as Nayman puts it, the true victor in a fifty-year war of attrition.

Nayman's complex book, in an adequate translation by Wendy Rosslyn, is an ideal accompanying guide to the two-volume *Complete Poems of Anna Akhmatova*, translated by Judith Hemschemeyer. These volumes present for the first time in English translation the complete poems of Akhmatova, some 700 in all. In addition to a copious bibliography and chronology of Akhmatova's life, the volumes also contain a preface by Hemschemeyer, a first-rate scholarly introduction by Roberta Reeder, a complete memoir by Isaiah Berlin, excerpts from Nayman's memoir and more than 100 photographs, some published for the first time.

Translating Russian poetry is a formidable task. Form and content are so closely intertwined and the language is so rich, onomatopoeic, and grammatically flexible that recreating both the content and the form in the English language is next to impossible.

Some have attempted to render Akhmatova's poems from literal translations provided by others, but it takes a high degree of true poetic artistry to make this technique work without either forfeiting the inherent meaning for the sake of form or form for the sake of meaning. Akhmatova herself translated many poets, including those from Italy, Serbia, Poland, India, Korea and Armenia, using "literals" provided by specialists. She managed to convey both her own spirit and the voice of the author, striking a golden mean whereby she enhanced the author in her native tongue.

Judith Hemschemeyer, a professor at the University of Central Florida, set much the same goal for herself in her ambitious task. She learned Russian in order to begin translating Akhmatova in 1976, completing her first draft in 1982. Hemschemeyer is quick to admit that the act of translating entails sacrifices. Akhma-

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tova herself called it comparable to devouring one's own brains. In Russian, many full rhyme schemes are possible, while English is far more limited. Instead of "reaching for a rhyming word at the expense of meaning," Hemschemeyer chose to rely on slant rhymes, assonance and alliteration in a technique that mostly works well, although in places full meaning is compromised. Her efforts largely succeed in giving the English reader some idea of the intensity with which Akhmatova wrote.

Reeder's introduction is a marvelous accompaniment to Hemschemeyer's translations. Reeder divides Akhmatova's life, loves and tribulations into sections that include the early years, the Revolution, the shaping of the Soviet state, World War II and the postwar years. These sections review Akhmatova's literary efforts and the corresponding political-historical context.

Even the nonspecialist reader will delight in these volumes, finding in the chronological presentation of Akhmatova's work the evolution of a master. She lived in terrible times and reacted with heroism, writes Berlin. While she never uttered an audible word against the Soviet regime, her entire life was an indictment of Russian reality. Anna Akhmatova's poems attest to that and, in their immortality, to her spiritual triumph. □

VIDEOS.

BEN SONNENBERG

Aelita, Queen of Mars
Others From the U.S.S.R.

Kino Video has a series called, hauntingly, "Red Silents: Visions of a Workers' State." Yakov Protazanov's *Aelita, Queen of Mars* is the wackiest of these. Made in 1924 and based on a novel by Alexei Tolstoy, it was a big international hit. It has interplanetary travel, romance, murder, theft and fraud, a comic detective, thoughts about mankind's future in space (also comic) and political comment (ditto). Its scenes here on Earth are, well, earthbound; the acting is naturalistic (looking forward to Lee Strasberg). Its Mars, by contrast, is out of this world. Mars was designed, sets and costumes alike, by Alexandra Exter, one of the greatest Constructivists, and the Martians act with expressive, large, artificial gestures (looking forward to Martha Graham).

Aelita tells of a Moscow engineer who murders his wife, travels to Mars in the company of Gussev, a lately demobilized hero of the Revolution, falls in love with Queen Aelita, overthrows the evil Tuskub and, with Gussev's help, brings about a workers' revolt. Gussev: "Comrades, only you can help yourselves. It used to be the same in our land . . . [Effective cut here to a blacksmith forging a steel sickle and laying his hammer down on it.] Follow our example. Unite into a Martian Union of Soviet Socialist Republics." Soon our engineer hero exclaims: "Victory! The army is on our side!" But then Queen Aelita commands: "Open fire on the rebels! Drive them back to their caves! Now I alone will reign and rule!"

At this point our hero wakes up; his wife is alive, it was all a terrible dream. He destroys his rocket blueprints. The ending is not only a triumph of Social Realism (and naturalistic acting) over Modernism; it also augurs no Sputnik. More sadly, *Aelita* presages the doom of a generation of artists. The movie's craziest aspect is that it concentrates all the energies of Constructivism, the most progressive art movement of its time, in an extraterrestrial system, where its properties are made to stand for reaction and tyranny. An epitome of this paradox is the fate of the space telescope on Mars. We first watch it composing itself from two pieces of coiled wire and five triangular pieces of glass—a perfect Constructivist sculpture, and the visual high point of the film—only to see it smashed later by a state official in a fit.

You'll want to see *Aelita* if, like me, you've always been annoyed by expensive sci-fi special effects. The ones here are on the level of *The Twilight Zone*'s. You'll also want to see it if, like me, you're prepared to believe that dialectical materialism is at least as solid as whatever underpins *Close Encounters* and *Star Wars*.

Lev Kuleshov's *The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks* (1924) is a satire on what Americans used to think of the Soviet Union. It is also about Moscow at the start of the New Economic Policy (NEP), which invited foreign investment. In *Mr. West*, the great Russian director Vsevolod Pudovkin plays a con man known as "The Count." He and his female confederate, "The Countess," look borrowed from a movie by Pabst, and Mr. West, the capitalist ("President of the Y.M.C.A."), looks like Harold Lloyd with a cigar. The whole movie, a lame attempt at something commercial, is imitative; still, it is worth seeing. It reminds you of how Moscow once looked like the London of Dickens, and it well shows the trials of the NEP period, so like those of the "shock therapy" now prescribed so promiscuously for the good of all Eastern Europe.

Pudovkin's own *The End of St. Petersburg*, famous to all students of film, was one of three major movies made in 1927 to celebrate the Bolsheviks' first decade in power. (The others were Esther Shub's documentary *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* and Sergei Eisenstein's *October*.) Like Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation*, *The End of St. Petersburg* is Homeric—violent and rapid, with lyrical narrative passages. Its underlying myth is that the crux of the Revolution was the taking of the Winter Palace by the Communists. Its triumphant ending is more than ever like "Ozymandias." The whole work is ennobled by detestation of privilege, faith in progress, trust in the working class and love for the city of Bely, Dostoyevsky and Pushkin.

The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty is the very best birthday present a revolution could receive. It begins in 1912, with the 400th anniversary of the Romanov dynasty, and ends with an evocation of Lenin's fateful arrival at the Finland Station in April 1917. The Romanovs threw a mad party just as the tumbrels were starting to roll. The uniforms stiff with medals and gold, the gowns, the helmets, the feathers, the plumes! This grand ball of the old world order, seen at the very moment when all the lights were about to go out, was the last such assembly of the blind before the First World War. Shub goes on to show czarist Russia in a deep and systematic way. From archival footage, she gives pictures of Russia's numberless ranks. She shows the Pogromists (the "Black Hundreds"), the pompous bishops and sinister priests, the capitalists preparing for war and, most feelingly, the farm and factory workers and the soldiers at the front. Shub, who lived from 1894 to 1949, has been hailed as a fine film editor and a mentor of Eisenstein; she deserves better. *The Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* proves her to have been an exhilarating talent, marked but not overwhelmed by Rodchenko's zeal for an art made of facts.

Ben Sonnenberg is the author of Lost Property: Memoirs & Confessions of a Bad Boy *(Summit Books.)*

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Alexander Medvedkin's *Happiness* (1934) is a complete surprise. Its hero and heroine, Mr. and Mrs. Loss, are humanity at its most hapless. Go get some good luck, says Mrs. Loss, I'm tired of living like this. Enter a polka-dotted horse. He sets out on it. What a greedy and disobedient steed. Loss finds plenty of luck, good and bad (mostly good), but is always thwarted by those staunch enemies of the hapless: priests, the police and the too-well-fed. *Happiness* has two great comic scenes, one involving a walking house and the other a failed suicide. Made hurriedly and mostly improvised, it is all a good silent should be.

Eisenstein said of *Happiness*, "Today, I have seen how a Bolshevik laughs!" One Bolshevik, Stalin, was not amused; he banned the film—which is scarcely to be wondered at, Medvedkin having taken aim (in '34!) at collectivization. The filmmaker drew from the fairy tales of Saltykov-Shchedrin, which in turn derived from Gogol. His visual style owed much to Kiev, where, Mandelstam tells us, art breathed with three breaths—Russian, Ukrainian, Jewish. *Happiness* is a worldly, antirealist film, two further insults to Stalin. A comic triumph, brainy and brave, it reminds you of Aristophanes. Or, better, *Krazy Kat*.

Some of the Kino "Red Silents" made me long to see a "radical" American film of the 1920s. So I put on Chaplin's matchless *A Woman of Paris* (1923). How pleased I was to find later in a "self-interview" by Mayakovsky:

> *Q*: Why is *A Woman of Paris* so dazzling?
> *A*: Because, in its organization of simple little facts, it achieves the greatest emotional saturation.

Written and directed by Chaplin but starring Adolphe Menjou, *A Woman of Paris* must be seen for Menjou's superb attention to the "simple little facts."

Compared with Mayakovsky, other Russian poets of the day were often quite resistant to film. Mandelstam's 1913 poem "The Cinematograph" mocks the medium's "sentimental fever and banality," and he once composed a witty polemic against Eisenstein, "I Write a Scenario." Yet the movies got into a lot of the work of the most "formalist" poets. Pasternak's poem "Nineteen Five," contemporary with *The Battleship Potemkin* (1925), is markedly filmic in passages, and once even Akhmatova had the idea of reshaping the final part of her great *Poem Without a Hero* (1962) into a scenario. These lines from Part II (in Amanda Haight's translation) recall both *October* and *The End of St. Petersburg*:

> Christmas time was warmed by bonfires,
> Carriages slipped and fell from bridges,
> The whole mournful city was swimming
> To a destination unknown to all,
> With or against the Neva's current,
> As long as it was away from its graves.

Some Kino videos can be obtained from the mail-order houses listed in the January 20 video review, or from Facets Multimedia (1517 West Fullerton Avenue, Chicago IL 60614; 1-800-331-6197). □

MUSIC.

EDWARD W. SAID

Uncertainties of Style

The recent storm of controversy—first over the "West as America" exhibition at the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American Art and later over Oliver Stone's *JFK*—suggests an extraordinary public insecurity about the past. This uneasiness is evident in institutions where public representations of the past are supposed to deliver authoritative images not only of what America is (or was) but also of what America should view or listen to. It is a sure sign of imperial ascendancy in crisis, what with the economy a shambles, the official culture under attack and the old formula about American exceptionalism, innocence and patriotism faring very poorly. Hence, I believe, the need individuals and institutions feel to speak for or against an overriding consensus about America, as if what was at stake were not only a performance or an exhibition but American destiny itself. A wearying, humorless business.

Thus when, after decades of performing no new works, the Metropolitan Opera commissions an opera from composer John Corigliano and his librettist, William Hoffman, it bodes ill. So loaded down with expectations and significance was the enterprise, that when it finally came in December and January the opera lumbered in like a mastodon dressed in a pink tutu. Too long in the planning and writing, *The Ghosts of Versailles* was one of the most unsuccessful spectacles I have ever seen at the Met, incoherent and (literally) preposterous as an idea, undistinguished and mostly forgettable as music, bewilderingly opulent and needlessly elaborate as production. (Not surprisingly, it sold out all performances, partly because of media hype, partly because of rave reviews in the daily press.)

It is somewhere said of Wagner's first (and nonextant) opera that in Acts I and II all the characters are killed, only to return as singing ghosts in Act III. It was booed off the stage and has (rightly) never been performed since. Corigliano and Hoffman have not only emulated but have tried to outdo Wagner's conceit: Their opera is entirely populated by ghosts, from Act I, with its Prologue and five scenes, through Act II, with its nine scenes and finale. I very much admired Andrew Porter's dutiful attempt in *The New Yorker* to make sense of this awful mishmash, but even he is finally defeated by the opera's needless involutions. Suffice it to say that *The Ghosts of Versailles* conceives of late-eighteenth-century French history and culture as suspended in a limbo of wraiths and unhoused plot possibilities, in which Beaumarchais's unfinished *La Mère coupable* (after *The Barber of Seville* and *The Marriage of Figaro*) is a pretext for plots and counterplots involving Almaviva, Figaro and Susanna from the world of imagination, and Beaumarchais, Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette from the real world of history.

Already we can see how ludicrous this is when we note that, as the program coyly puts it, "the characters themselves inhabit a world without boundaries" or, for that matter, without sense—to put it mildly. The point of this exercise rests upon a peculiarly American desire to rewrite and reconcile history: Beaumarchais, the radical (who in one scene prosecutes the Queen), and Marie Antoinette, the archreactionary, are in love. In the final moment of the final scene we see the two in an embrace, stage front, while at the back of the stage the "real" Marie is guillotined. But since they are all ghosts anyway, we suddenly realize that even in the land of ghosts there are classes and degrees of acceptability, real revolution being considerably lower in status than Pollyanna and her chums.

As if all this—with an interminable subplot involving Almaviva's illegitimate child and a rascally revolutionary Bégearss (sung to no avail by the formidably capable English tenor Graham Clark)—were not enough, there is an interpolated scene near the middle designed to show eighteenth-century "Turkomania." Here we get Marilyn Horne as Samira, the Ottoman pasha's favorite singer, who disports herself in a disgracefully idiotic caricature of not Turkish but Arabic mu-

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sic, with poorly written and pronounced Arabic words as her text. The scene serves no dramatic or musical purpose but that of sanctioned tastelessness: The Arab/Islamic world, quite bad enough in its present morass, is degraded still further by this utterly silly and confusing scene. Why a great singer like Horne should agree to perform such trash is rather bewildering.

Given all this, the real question is whether any music could be good, or bad, enough. Corigliano produced something perfectly suited to it, which I mean as at best an ambiguous compliment. Admittedly, I saw *The Ghosts of Versailles* only once, but the music was broadcast and I have a tape of it to which I have again and again referred. The music seems to me to be an unhappy mixture of three idioms, none of which has imparted a distinctive and successful aural personality to the whole. First, there is a pastiche of eighteenth-century musical style, using Mozart and his contemporaries as the takeoff point; second, there is American musical comedy plus Viennese operetta style, carried to parodistically brassy and overassertive lengths; then there is a sort of anonymous late- and postserial modernist idiom, overly dominated by Corigliano's impression of what, say, *Lulu* might be like if its techniques could be recycled in the 1990s. This is eclecticism without definition, one symptom of which is a radical uncertainty about when to end individual arias and scenes. The only sizable orchestral interlude occurs in the second act, which suggests that Corigliano was afraid to risk music that wasn't serviceably tied to the action; that interlude is tame stuff indeed, gray and on the whole fairly nondescript.

What makes the opera's weaknesses especially apparent is the enormously lavish scale of the production. It would be hard to fault any of the singers—Teresa Stratas, Hakan Hagegard, Clark, Horne and Gino Quilico, among others—who seemed always to be struggling to find conviction enough to get over the ordeal. But the sets are big and expensive, the production values very much those of Hollywood, and the careening and inane energy of the whole is such as to tug orchestra and cast remorselessly through one hoop after another. I have no doubt that Corigliano, Hoffman and James Levine (the conductor) are gifted and serious artists, but there is something so willfully misconceived and overdone about the enterprise as to beggar even their talents. For in the end we are talking about an operatic production designed to woo the audience not so much with the work itself but with the power of an institution important enough to mount so lavish and expensive a theatrical evening, then to call it a "new opera," all without a hint of irony.

Yet *The Ghosts of Versailles* sits right next to the Met's extraordinary *Idomeneo*, which I saw scarcely a week before. *Idomeneo* is one of Mozart's least tractable works, an *opera seria* of great length, considerable musical complexity and quite impressive vocal difficulty. Levine conducted the performance without a single false moment or imprecise inflection. The plot of *Idomeneo* spins out from the Trojan War and involves an unengaging mix of melodramatic heroics and very stylized situations that out-Glucks Gluck, so to speak. Luciano Pavarotti has made a specialty of the title role, with wonderful results (at least to a non-Pavarotti fan like myself). He did not sing in the performance I attended, the role being taken creditably by the Canadian Ben Heppner, who is a slowly emerging *Heldentenor* with a tendency to be less expressive and various than his excellent voice would otherwise allow. Dawn Upshaw sang Ilia wonderfully, as did the very elegant Susanne Mentzer as Idamante. In the third big female role of the opera, Carol Vaness as Elettra got off to a somewhat shrieky start but brought down the house in her big third-act aria, with brilliance and passion combined in rare measure.

What one senses in the striking disparity between *Idomeneo* and *The Ghosts of Versailles* is not only the major discrepancy in the quality of the music but also the Met's institutional commitment to its role not simply as an important opera house but as the opera house of record. When it comes to what are in effect museum pieces—which, for all its grandeur and splendid music, *Idomeneo* is—the mandate is curatorial, and even antiquarian. This has marred the Met's *Ring* productions, as well as last spring's *Parsifal*, which Levine conducted as if he were disinterring, rather than enlivening and animating, the music. Happily for *Idomeneo*, a period piece even in Mozart's time, the Met's approach works. But when it comes to contemporary work, or operas that might be interpreted as having something urgent to say to contemporary audiences, style, decor and production lose the effect of a direct and forceful statement and become instead either parody or a jumble of loose ends.

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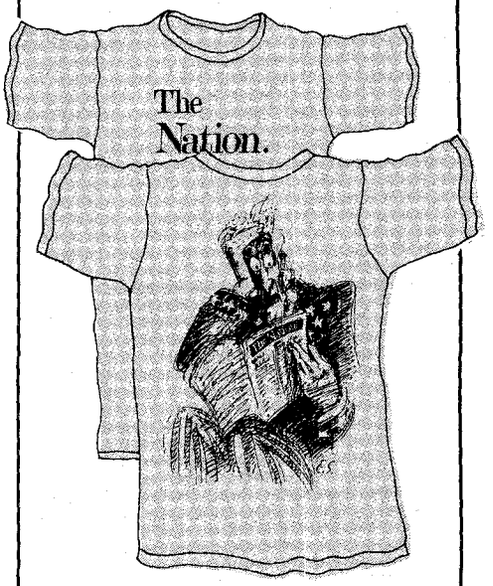

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As a whole *The Ghosts of Versailles* is far from being just a screwball effort to redo the French Revolution, to wish publicly that it never happened; it is also an opera meant to be uncontroversial, dealing only with ghosts, lackluster fictions, costumed put-ons who are so distanced and alienating as in the end to be almost completely unaffecting. Thus opera is shoved even further back from relevance or contemporary culture, which has the effect of saying that art ought to be as incoherent and as unchallenging to the status quo as possible. No wonder, therefore, that it was the Met that commissioned *Ghosts* and no wonder that all the opera's much-ado was finally rendered so inoffensive and trivial.

At an almost exactly opposite pole was the City Opera's *Die Soldaten*, an opera completed in the mid-1960s by the German composer Bernd Alois Zimmerman and performed first in this country in Boston by Sarah Caldwell in 1982. City's production last October was, I think, one of its triumphs, not because of the opera itself but because as a sort of junior varsity house, City could devote itself seriously to the work and not worry too much about the politically correct position for a major opera company of record to take. It seems grimly objectionable to mention that *Die Soldaten*'s composer committed suicide shortly after finishing the work, but it really is relevant. My impression is that Zimmerman took seriously Berg's achievements in *Wozzeck* and *Lulu*, and tried to build a work on that achievement. The result is a huge cinematic composition of unrelieved darkness and a kind of unforgiving grandeur that requires not only a large number of extremely skillful singers but an enormous orchestra of more than 100 musicians.

The story is based on a work by Jakob Lenz, an eighteenth-century writer who greatly impressed Büchner (indeed, there's a marvelous story by Büchner called "Lenz"), which Zimmerman turns into a weird combination of both *Lulu* and *Wozzeck*: the degradation of Zimmerman's Marie and her ordeals as enacted in a setting of soldiers' barracks and heartless commercialism. Rhoda Levine's production is brilliantly designed, and so overpoweringly theatrical as to submit the audience to trial by intensity. Among the many superb performers, Lisa Saffer as Marie was in a class by herself: Unfailingly effective, she sang the fearsomely difficult part without a hesitant note or accent—true, direct, lyrical. It is not entirely a coincidence that two of the best male performers—Thomas Young and Eugene Perry—are Peter Sellars regulars, who did remarkable things in *Die Soldaten*.

I said above that the opera was at an exactly opposite pole from *The Ghosts of Versailles*. Except for a couple of very Berg-like moments when he quotes a Bach chorale, Zimmerman, because he is so single-minded and undramatic, is a deeply flawed composer. Doubtless if one were to study the gigantic score there would be niceties and refinements to be discerned. But the general sense it delivers is unmistakably that of a man mirroring his pain and anguish directly onto a musical style uninflected, untempered by anything except anger and despair. In one of the program supplements for City Opera's production a commentator denies this, claiming that far from supplying "overkill" Zimmerman's music provides evidence that the composer was a "master of restraint." This is patently untrue. Were it not for the skill and beauty of Lisa Saffer's presence you would not be able to hear much except heaps upon piles of densely aggressive sonorities; these are immediately expressive, directly, even blatantly, programmatic. The world is horrible, people are shits, innocence cannot, must not survive. Whether this ludicrously reductive *Weltanschauung* is musically boring because we've heard too much twelve-tone expressionism or seen too many horror movies with manipulative soundtracks, it is hard to tell. But *Die Soldaten* tries with all its force and resonances to leap across the proscenium and beat up the audience, a sort of crudely overdone naturalism without enough of a redeeming and clarifying aesthetic. It makes for satisfying a morbid curiosity and then moving on gratefully to performances of other music.

Which brings me at last to two exceptionally satisfying concert performances in recent months, vitally different in most ways, yet sharing a similar coherence of style and conception. I have been listening to the pianist Shura Cherkassky for about thirty years. Oddly enough, however, I have not listened much to his recordings, nor, given his Slavic (as opposed to Central European) pedigree, has he seemed to me to be interestingly at work in the repertory that I am most concerned with: Thus the Chopin, Beethoven and Brahms that often dot his

THE GARDEN

We were in the garden talking
about disbelief, how it was
a practical choice—you couldn't
just decide to believe

as no one could resolve
to fall in love.
We were talking about the past,
the hopes we had for it.

Then there were skies of all kinds,
nights into which we disappeared
leaving the rest for later.
Things were different then, we said,

as if that were not always the truth.
So the future was a grand park
where we strolled, observing
the monuments, the fine inscriptions.

Around us trees
were moving, and the flowers
were ghosts of themselves in the moonlight.
Inside, cool breezes unfolded

throughout the house, room after room,
like a sadness without explanation
although—we might have said it—
as much like joy.

Lawrence Raab

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programs seem put there largely to offset the Balakirev and showy Liszt pieces that have been his hallmark. A student of Josef Hofmann—a wonderful piano "great," although in my opinion a mystifyingly sanctified one, since there are only a small number of recordings around—Cherkassky is now 80. He has always been amusing to watch, what with his fussy little gestures, his often cutesy virtuosity, his seemingly unrestricted capacity to amuse and delight his audiences. Yet when he appeared at Carnegie Hall in December there was an effect rather like an epiphany that came from his playing, particularly in works (the Bach-Busoni Chaconne, the Schumann Symphonic Etudes, the Chopin E Major Scherzo) that are now encrusted with the habits and fake traditions of overuse and familiarity. I was reminded of the experience of watching the class clown suddenly turn in an academic performance of such sober mastery as to knock you back.

Shaw lets the music unfold . . . an illusion, of course, since immense work goes into such sounds.

Part of the surprise was that Cherkassky had lost most of his distracting mannerisms, and with that had gained an unexpected gravity and seriousness of focus. There were moments in the middle variations where I felt that Schumann's obsessive insistence caused Cherkassky to lose his concentration, as if the illogical accents and numbing patterns bothered, or temporarily grounded, him. But in the Busoni, which he took at an unusually slow tempo, there was a robustness and rounded tonal beauty to the whole that made you actually *see* the stunning elaborations developing out of Bach's formal germ, as well as Busoni's exceptionally intelligent pianistic transformation of what had once been a violin piece. So too in the opening sections of the Schumann, as well as the Chopin Scherzo, where the fantastic lightness of the work, with its ascending and then downward echoing chordal progressions, kept returning with a graceful nonchalance very rarely attempted, much less encountered. Cherkassky returned to his customary repertoire with dashingly entertaining performances of difficult display pieces by Hofmann and Paul Pabst; the latter's paraphrase on themes from Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin* belongs to the category of virtuoso pieces (e.g., the Schulz-Evler *Blue Danube*) that sound as if they could not be learned but have to be elegantly tossed off with a constant apprehension of imminent catastrophe.

You wouldn't want to say that Cherkassky is a Richter or a Michelangeli; he isn't. But when he plays he never seems worried that he might not be making an important statement about history, or that he is only a pianist doing his work. For that, quite without any embarrassment, is what he is, a pianist caught up in his job, without too many irrelevancies or pomposities. Cherkassky is genuine, attractive, persuasive. He shares this talent with the other musician recently in town, Robert Shaw, who at 75 is just as amazingly durable.

Shaw gained prominence in the 1950s, although during that period I attended only one of his performances with the Robert Shaw Chorale. He first came to attention as Toscanini's chorus director for the NBC Symphony, with results in intonation and virtuosity that are still unmatched, particularly in hitherto unperformed or very difficult works. Like Cherkassky he harks back to an earlier, less culturally pretentious time, when music making derived mainly from amateur singing, four-hand piano playing at home and the much awaited weekly broadcasts of the New York Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Opera. This was well before the days of ubiquitous "good music stations," and before the time when it became fashionable to assume that important cultural institutions were vehicles for the nation's identity.

There is something so irrefrangibly modest about Shaw's manner that you think it's all an act, like Rudolf Serkin's way of walking on to the stage somehow plaintively and apologetically. Although Shaw conducted the Atlanta Symphony for a couple of decades the job wasn't *supposed* to be significant, so his achievements were not really noticed. After he retired he started doing more recording and appearing with other orchestras across the country, where I have heard him on several occasions. On January 19 he was at Carnegie Hall leading the Orchestra of St. Luke's, a remarkably fine Robert Shaw Festival Chorus and excellent soloists—soprano Benita Valente,

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mezzo Florence Quivar, tenor Neil Rosenshein and bass Alistair Miles—in the *Missa Solemnis*, precisely the work for which, under Toscanini, his choral preparation had been the most impressive ever recorded.

It was certainly the finest performance of the piece that I have heard since Toscanini, and yet it could not have been more different. The *Missa* has been brilliantly characterized by Adorno in a famous essay as an "alienated masterpiece," that is, a work whose eccentricity, musical intractability and transcendental conception have never really been accommodated to the musical canon. It is also a very difficult piece to perform, full of abrupt changes in tempo and volume for musicians to negotiate, unfamiliar modal harmonies and, especially in the immense Credo, extremely complex fugal writing characteristic of the Hammerklavier Sonata and the Diabelli Variations, among other late Beethoven pieces. Yet although the *Missa Solemnis* typifies the *Spätstil* or late style, which Adorno says was symbolic of Beethoven's rejection of the ordinary bourgeois world, one can also hear in these forbidding works a search for order and reliability. Maynard Solomon in his *Beethoven Essays* ventures the more personal thesis that the *Missa Solemnis* and the Ninth Symphony reflect Beethoven's declining health, his problems with his nephew and of course his horrific sense of personal loneliness; far from rejecting the world, they are attempts musically to come to new terms with it. "The *Missa Solemnis*," says Solomon, "has the implication of a double question to the deity: Am I merely mortal? Is there hope for eternal life?"

Naturally enough, the interrogatory music of this towering work can be given variously freighted interpretations. What was so impressive about Shaw's was that it was thoroughly, perhaps even insistently, unneurotic. A recent recording of the work by Karajan (EMI) attempts the same feat, with the unintended effect, however, of rendering the music self-satisfied, muddy, sleekly placid. Shaw's energy was focused less on startling detail than on creating a collective personality, that of a traveler perhaps, or of a questing pilgrim. The sounds and tempi were robust, never nervous or querulous. One felt in his conducting something often tried by younger conductors seeking an impression of elevated tranquillity, but rarely achieved. He also gained the illusion of complete naturalness, so that even in perilous spots like the devilish fugue at the end of the Credo, or in the perhaps more difficult Benedictus, whose soaringly serene lines defy normal intonation, Shaw let the music unfold, rather than declaim or announce itself. This is a total illusion, of course, since what goes into such sounds is immense work, manifestly concealed.

He had the soloists sit up near the chorus, at some distance from stage front, which is where they are usually placed. This somewhat took away from the bass's contribution, but it did contribute to the communal and associative effort of the whole. At only one point—in the Benedictus's extended violin obbligato played decently if somewhat monochromatically by Naoko Tanaka—did I feel that what was needed was a bit more striving and less natural-sounding tranquillity; as with much of Beethoven's late music written in a very high register, sublimity and a tense eeriness are its true hallmark, and it sounds merely awkward when it is played too unexcitedly.

Shaw's musical, or rather platform, presence suggests a saintly, incredibly modest man. Accordingly, he takes curtain calls from the back rows of the orchestra, as if to say it's not me, it's all of us, and Beethoven, of course. A bit corny perhaps, but the iron rigor of his performances shouldn't be underestimated either. He is the real thing, a great musician whose avoidance of self-conscious display sets him at odds with the Zubin Mehtas of this world. Perhaps you can do what he does if you are not entrusted with safekeeping a national institution like the Met or the Philharmonic, where you have to take positions about "us" every time you lift your arms or blow your nose. The peculiar thing about Shaw is that, unlike Celibidache, another older conductor of extraordinary attainments and uncompromising standards, he does not communicate marginality or irrelevance. It is as if the music were simply expressing itself. This is the finest aesthetic illusion of all. □

THE MIRACULOUS SHRINE OF THE STAIRWAY DIME

Fourteen wooden steps to my front door.
On the fifth step, a dime that's lasted there
for years despite dust and brooms, boots
that ferry in mud-lumps and lakes of melted snow.

Finally, to celebrate, I tape next to it
an antique post card: Ste. Anne de Beaupré, a blue
robed, hand-tinted Virgin—she has to be a Virgin
in a dress that blue, holding aloft

a little man in pink pajamas and this, of course,
is Jesus, gold spikes of light flying from him
straight and strict as a grade school teacher's
admonishments, or a father's: *Sit still.*

Stop singing. Now we will begin our sums.
But I climb past, thinking of my friend in seminary,
how the dime would not be enough
to reach him now, how letting go means just that.

And where I see the miraculous star
of God's heart holding steady, I am afraid
he would describe a riot of blasphemy. But I know
this: as a child, he'd put his pillow

on the windowsill waiting
for the visitation of satellites
and shooting stars. How later, his mother
would smooth his dew-drenched hair then draw him

back gently without waking him
into the dark and starless room,
a child still shining
from the far worlds he had been touched by.

Mekeel McBride

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EXCHANGE.

(*Continued From Page 290*)
nouncement on November 21, one day before the assassination in Dallas.

3) Two days after the assassination, Johnson and his top advisers (all Kennedy holdovers) approved a new policy statement, finalized as NSAM 273 of November 26. With respect to the 1,000 men, the text was highly ambiguous, if not deliberately misleading. It implied continuity with previous *objectives* of withdrawing troops (as had been announced publicly on October 2) but failed to reaffirm NSAM 263, which had implemented the plan to withdraw them.

Here is the language: "The objectives of the United States with respect to the withdrawal of U.S. military personnel remain as stated in the White House statement of October 2, 1963." Of course the *objectives* remained the same: No one wanted the U.S. troops to fight there forever. But the *implementation* of troop withdrawal, an implementation so controversial that to this day many people deny and lie about it, had been replaced by the earlier objectives and nothing more.

4) Let us now turn to the key policy innovation of Johnson's NSAM 273, that the United States would begin carrying the war north. For the first time in any presidential directive, NSAM 273 authorized prompt planning for "different" (i.e., escalating) levels of U.S. activity against North Vietnam, up to and including bombing. These operations, which led to the August 1964 Tonkin Gulf incident, had in fact been discussed for some time inside the Pentagon but had never before been presented for presidential authorization.

5) There has been a flood of cover-up and lying about this policy innovation by L.B.J. In the secret "Pentagon Papers" an account of NSAM 273 claimed that it "revalidated the planned phased withdrawal of U.S. forces announced publicly . . . limited cross-border operations to an area 50 kilometers inside Laos. . . . No new programs were proposed or endorsed." This Pentagon lie is virtually repeated by Cockburn when he assures *Nation* readers that "there was . . . no change in policy." The secret summary of another of the "Pentagon Papers" stated categorically that "the U.S. did effect a 1,000 man withdrawal in December 1963," but the paper being summarized had also just as categorically denied this.

Recent controversy has revived the lying. Although both NSAMs were declassified in the 1970s, the obfuscation of the record in *The Washington Post*, *The New York Times*—and now *The Nation*—continues. George Lardner wrote in the *Post* last July that NSAM 273 "ordered the withdrawal [of 1,000 troops] to be carried out." (It didn't.) Michael Specter in the *Times* is longer, and worse: NSAM 273 "continued Kennedy's policies, and historians have shown that it was drafted the day before Kennedy journeyed to Dallas." But on November 21, the day in question, Kennedy was in Texas and never saw the draft prepared for his signature. He may of course have heard it over the telephone. But the draft spoke only of additional resources for activities against North Vietnam by the Saigon government. NSAM 273 deleted this restriction and sanctioned the plans for U.S. operations that began shortly thereafter. This alone is proof of the change in policy that occurred under L.B.J. on November 24.

Of the three obfuscations, Cockburn's is the longest, and the worst. Dipping deep into my article, he quotes extensively not from my argument but from NSAM 273 and an earlier Kennedy-era statement of October 2, 1963. He suggests, quite falsely, that I merely compared the two, laying "enormous weight upon minute textual alterations" and "signaling these with urgent italic." But it was three texts, not two, I was comparing, in three parallel columns. And the point of the italic was to show that in 1963, as earlier in 1961, Kennedy had refused to make the final commitment to an overriding objective—"to win"—that Johnson made so swiftly in NSAM 273. In other words, Cockburn makes my three-part sandwich look beefless by himself removing the beef. Despite the space he devotes to trashing me, only one of my sentences is quoted, and that one to misrepresent it.

No one can deny that Kennedy was a hawk, at least until the shock of the 1962 Cuban missile crisis. But after that crisis he explored new and more conciliatory policies in the Caribbean as well as Vietnam. Here Cockburn is totally unreliable. How can he claim that Kennedy "never entertained the idea of a settlement as advocated by [Ambassador] J.K. Galbraith"? Galbraith's idea was for a quid pro quo based on a *phased American withdrawal* (my urgent italic), precisely what Kennedy set in motion in 1962 and then implemented with NSAM 263. And how can he blame Kennedy for the 1963 coups in Guatemala and the Dominican Republic? Kennedy refused to recognize the military juntas that took over there and in Honduras—another policy that was swiftly reversed by Johnson. Thomas Mann, the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico who had been deeply involved in the Guatemala coup, had announced in mid-1963 that he would retire; instead, Johnson promoted him to preside over the new policy of encouraging coups in Latin America, like the one in Brazil in 1964.

I cannot prove that Kennedy, had he lived, could have pursued these policy divergences to any different outcome. But in 1963 there were both bureaucratic and corporate pressures for him to do so. To say this may be an affront to those single-minded foundationalist Marxists who talk, like Cockburn, of "the open secrets and agendas of American capitalism." The fact remains that in late 1963 a worsening balance of payments forced Presidents to choose between defending the dollar and security for overseas investment. Kennedy was inclined to the former before Johnson chose the latter.

Those familiar with my research into deep politics (unacknowledged political processes) and parapolitics (the exploitation of these, as in the C.I.A.-Mafia connection) will appreciate how consistently such research is resisted by the establishment left (*The Nation*) in almost the same terms as the establishment center (the *Times*). Both consistently deny that covert forces can influence politics as well as implement them. Both thus illustrate the hyperstructuralism of "power systems" analysis, which anti-foundationalists see linking Talcott Parsons to Michel Foucault. The center writes out of false optimism, the left out of false despair. But both write out of false consciousness, to rationalize their disempowerment.

The result is a shared resistance to new facts, like those about the assassination, to which their hyperstructuralism cannot give meaning. (One thinks of the Nicaraguan Communists who, like their opponents from the center and right, joined the UNO coalition to resist the Sandinistas.) And increasingly, as we have just seen, a shared distortion and repression of other facts, such as the documented Vietnam policy change. *Peter Dale Scott*

MORTE D'ARTHUR

Washington

My friend Alexander Cockburn has no tolerance for those who wish to uncover homicidal conspiracies like the Kennedy assassination. He says there are more important things to worry about. He never actually denies there was a conspiracy to kill the President; he just thinks U.S. foreign policy would have remained pretty much the same had John Kennedy lived or died, for J.F.K. was an anticommunist cold warrior, committed to counterinsurgency and military interventionism. Therefore, how he died is a matter of no great moment.

Alexander argues from a structuralist position, to wit: When we try to reduce great developments of history to the hidden machinations of conspiracy, "out the window goes any sensible analysis of institutions, economic trends and pressures, continuities in corporate and class interest and all the other elements . . . of American capitalism." How true. Yet this does not mean we can discount the role of human agency in history. The great "continuities in corporate and class interest" do not happen of themselves like reified, disembodied social forces. The function of state leaders is to act as willful and conscious agents in re-creating the conditions of politico-economic dominance. They may not always get the results they want, but they do so often enough.

To achieve their goals they will resort to every form of mass manipulation and every means of force and violence—even against one of their own whom they have come to see as a liability. Thus, specific acts of assassination—be they by death squads in El Salvador or hit squads in Dealey Plaza—cannot be treated as exclusive of, or in competition with, the existence of broader systemic forces. They

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are part of what keeps those forces in control.

While the larger structural trends may set the outer limits of policy or exert strong pressures on leaders, this does not mean that all important policy is predetermined. Short of betraying fundamental class interests, different leaders can pursue different courses, the effects of which are not inconsequential to the lives of millions of people. Thus, it was not foreordained that the B-52 carpet bombing of Cambodia and Laos conducted by Nixon would have happened if Kennedy, or even Johnson or Humphrey, had been President. It was not foreordained by the imperatives of global capitalism that the United States invade Panama or heartlessly slaughter Iraqis. If Alexander thinks these things make no difference in the long run, he had better not tell that to the millions of Cambodians, Laotians, Salvadorans, Iraqis and others who still grieve for their shattered lives and lands.

John Kennedy was himself something of an assassin. He probably ordered the murder of Diem, a class cohort who had become a serious liability. He plotted attempts on Fidel Castro, a class enemy. But Kennedy also did withdraw 1,000 troops from Vietnam. He did have serious conflicts with the C.I.A. He did close the armed C.I.A. camps that were readying for a second Bay of Pigs. He did give Khrushchev a guarantee he would not invade Cuba. He did, in his American University speech, call for a re-examination of U.S. attitudes toward the Soviet Union. He was unwilling to intervene in Laos and instead negotiated a cease-fire and coalition government—which the C.I.A. refused to honor, preferring to back a right-wing militarist faction that continued the war.

Kennedy was seen by the national security establishment as a danger. Right-wingers referred to him as "that delinquent in the White House." That Alexander doesn't see him that way does not mean the C.I.A. shared his view. In any case, even if Kennedy was a total C.I.A. tool, the fact that the President can be assassinated with impunity by elements in the national security state raises grave questions about the security of us all. It is a momentous crime that should be uncovered. Exposing such crimes is an important part of democratic fightback, an important part of our struggle to delegitimate the national security state. This is why Oliver Stone's *JFK* does a great service. *Michael Parenti*

COCKBURN REPLIES

Los Angeles

The main point of *JFK*, writes one of the co-authors of its script, Zachary Sklar, was to demonstrate the existence of institutions more powerful than any elected official. The main point of my column was that J.F.K. always acted within the terms of those institutions and that, against the script's assertions, there is no evidence to the contrary. The film is premised on a lie. By its standards of analysis the "national security state" should have murdered L.B.J. during the 1964 presidential campaign on the ground that Barry Goldwater was more in tune with its interests, and should similarly have assassinated Ronald Reagan after the Reykjavík summit, where he nearly gave Gorbachev the store while lauding Lenin (for which enthusiasm he was sharply reproved by *The Washington Post*).

Both Sklar and Peter Dale Scott invoke John Newman's recent book *JFK and Vietnam* to buttress the thesis that whereas J.F.K. was committed to withdrawal from Vietnam, L.B.J. reversed this posture within days of the assassination in Dallas. Newman's work is a stew of muddled chronologies and unproven assertions that Kennedy was a closet dove seeking to maneuver around the superhawks, like Gen. Maxwell Taylor. Aside from some conversations recollected by men such as Kennedy's political operative Kenny O'Donnell or Senators Wayne Morse and Mike Mansfield, Newman offers nothing to back up his claim that J.F.K. nourished, little more than a year after the start of his presidency, a plan for disengagement. Meanwhile, Newman has to deal with J.F.K.'s numerous statements to the contrary.

There were plenty of those. Mid-July 1963, as quoted in J.F.K.'s *Presidential Papers*: "In my opinion, for us to withdraw from that effort would mean a collapse not only of South Vietnam, but Southeast Asia, so we are going to stay there." September 9, 1963, to David Brinkley: "What I am concerned about is that Americans will get impatient and say because they don't like events in Southeast Asia, or they don't like the government in Saigon, that we should withdraw. That only makes it easy for the Communists. I think we should stay." The public record shows J.F.K. was always hawkish. With a willful credulity akin to religious mania, Newman insists that J.F.K. was dissembling, concealing his private thoughts, throwing the hawks off track. Out of such data-free surmises he constructs his fairy tale. The evidence he assembles to underpin these false surmises proves exactly the opposite of his thesis.

What in fact was going on during this phase of the Vietnam War is not complicated. As Scott concedes in his letter, the famous 1,000-man withdrawal was proposed by Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara and General Taylor (though Scott seems to find nothing odd about the fact that the "strenuously suppressed record" of J.F.K.'s pacific strategy originated in part with superhawk Taylor) because, buoyed by euphoric reports from the field, at that time they thought the war was going according to plan and victory was in sight. There were also domestic political reasons for the adoption of such a course. But a qualifier was always there. Withdrawal of advisers could begin, "providing things go well," to quote one Pentagon official. Take J.F.K.'s answer in a May 22, 1963, press conference: "We are hopeful that the situation in Vietnam would permit some withdrawal in any case by the end of the year, but we can't possibly make that judgment at the present time. There is a long hard struggle to go." The minutes to the discussion of NSAM 263 have J.F.K. saying the same thing: "The action [withdrawal of 1,000 men] should be carried out routinely as part of our general posture of withdrawing people when they are no longer needed." And in implementing the withdrawal order, J.F.K. directed that "no further reductions in U.S. strength would be made until the requirements of the 1964 [military] campaign were clear." Remember that already by the end of 1961 J.F.K. had made the decisive initial commitment to military intervention, and that a covert campaign of terror and sabotage against the North was similarly launched under his aegis.

In his letter and also in his 1972 essay Scott makes a big point of contrasting J.F.K.'s supposed reluctance to articulate an overriding military "objective" in Vietnam against L.B.J.'s endorsement (in the opening paragraph of NSAM 273, signed on November 26, 1963) of the "win" posture as soon as he assumed the presidency. This distinction is pure philological fakery. On November 13, 1963, *The New York Times* published an interview with Michael Forrestal, a senior member of J.F.K.'s National Security Council, in which he said, "It would be folly . . . at the present time" to pursue "a negotiated settlement . . . between North and South Vietnam." J.F.K. himself, in a November 14 press conference addressing the situation in the wake of the Diem coup and discussing the upcoming Honolulu summit on Vietnam policy, said: "We do have a new situation there, and a new government, we hope, an increased effort in the war." He added, "Now, that is our object, to bring Americans home, permit the South Vietnamese to maintain themselves as a free and independent country, and permit democratic forces within the country to operate—which they can of course, much more freely when the assault from the inside, and which is manipulated from the North, is ended. So the purpose of the meeting in Honolulu is how to pursue these objectives."

Thus, J.F.K. was defining victory—to be followed by withdrawal of U.S. "advisers"—as ending the internal Communist assault in the South, itself manipulated from the North. Scott charges me with misrepresenting his argument that this posture can be sharply distinguished from the aggressive formulations in the opening statements of NSAM 273. I'm afraid that it is Scott who is being less than forthright with the historical data. In January 1991 the November 21 draft of NSAM 273, as drawn up by J.F.K.'s special assistant for national security affairs, McGeorge Bundy, was declassified. It is cited by Scott's hero, Newman, in a book Scott has endorsed for its "massive documentation" and therefore has presumably read.

As Newman acknowledges, the upshot of the Honolulu meeting was that for "the first time" the "shocking deterioration of the war was presented in detail to those assembled, along with a plan to widen the war, while the

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1,000-man withdrawal was turned into a meaningless paper drill." The next day, back in the White House, Bundy put the grim conclusions of the meeting into the draft language of NSAM 237, which, as he told Newman in 1991, he "tried to bring . . . in line with the words that Kennedy might want to say." Here is the first paragraph, which Newman says "reiterated the essence of Kennedy's policy":

> It remains the central object of the United States in South Vietnam to *assist* the people and Government of that country to win *their* contest against the externally directed and supported Communist conspiracy. The test of all decisions and U.S. actions in this area should be the effectiveness of their contributions to this purpose. (11/21/63)

Compare that with what Scott argues is the radical shift of NSAM 273 as finalized five days later under L.B.J.:

> It remains the *central objective* of the United States in South Vietnam to assist the people and Government of that country *to win* their contest against the externally *directed* and supported communist *conspiracy. The test of all U.S. decisions and actions in this area should be the effectiveness of their contributions to this purpose.* (11/26/63)

The italics in the first version are added by Newman, and in the second by Scott. They furnish an amusing example of two men trying to tilt, in different directions, virtually identical words. So Scott's whole edifice collapses, helped on its way by the words of the speech J.F.K. was to have delivered at the Dallas Trade Mart on November 22: "Our assistance to these nations can be painful, risky and costly, as is true in Southeast Asia today. But we dare not weary of the task."

There is no beef either in the famous paragraph 7 of NSAM 273, which in the fantasies of Scott and Newman and Sklar is crucial, and which runs in toto as follows: "Planning should include different levels of possible increased activity, and in each instance there should be estimates of such factors as: A. Resulting damage to North Vietnam; B. The plausibility of denial; C. Possible North Vietnamese retaliation; D. Other international reaction. Plans should be submitted promptly for approval by higher authority." If this paragraph had been drafted on November 20 instead of November 24, Scott, Newman and the others would be excitedly italicizing "*possible* increased activity" as evidence that J.F.K. was avoiding concrete military commitment.

J.F.K. in the last days of his Administration, and L.B.J. in the first days of his, defined victory in the same terms, and both were under similar illusions. As L.B.J. recalled, looking back on his first presidential session on Vietnam on November 24, 1963, "Most of the advisers agreed that we could begin withdrawing some of our advisers by the end of the year and a majority of them by the end of 1965." To conflate such a position with what Galbraith was urging is ridiculous.

What with all his heavy breathing about "deep politics" and "parapolitics," Scott either doesn't know or care very much about the actual, accessible historical record. To start with, he should read more Latin American history. J.F.K. most certainly can be blamed for the coups in Guatemala and the Dominican Republic. To take the latter: J.F.K.'s officials prevented Juan Bosch from mobilizing popular support, the only way a military coup could have been averted. They blocked land reform and obstructed his attempts to build a strong labor movement. They also refused to let him bring the armed forces under loyal leadership. In November of 1962, U.S. Ambassador John Bartlow Martin pressed the Dominican ruling council to harass and beat opposition figures. Robert Kennedy sent detectives to teach the art of riot control. In 1963, in Ambassador Martin's words about Bosch, the U.S. Embassy decided to "let him go." J.F.K.'s State Department recognized and supported the coup makers after a brief interval. In 1965, L.B.J. repeated J.F.K.'s achievement in nullifying the pro-constitutionalist threat. There was no "new policy" of L.B.J., encouraging coups in countries like Brazil. In 1962 R.F.K. went to Brasília expressly to lecture President João Goulart on Brazil's "disturbing drift to the left," meaning proposed land reform. Military assistance and supplies of riot control equipment were remitted to the security forces in increasing amounts. C.I.A. slush funds were distributed to right-wingers, and in that same year the prime U.S. adviser to the eventual coup makers, Gen. Vernon Walters, transferred from Rome to Rio as military attaché. Walters later recollected that at the time of his transfer he was told that President Kennedy would not be averse to Goulart's overthrow. Perhaps this is all too "foundationalist" for Scott.

So far as corporate and bureaucratic pressures are concerned, Wall Street didn't turn against Vietnam until 1968, following the mini-recession of 1966-67 and the Tet offensive. All in all, Scott reminds me of an amateur paleontologist scrambling off the fossil heap with the jaw of a dog, which he clamorously misidentifies as irrefutable proof of the missing link. His self-serving characterizations of the "establishment left" strike me as silly, also as evidence of a rather pathetic persecution mania. First he shouts for attention; then he says I was unfair for citing him rather than Newman. Scott has done some interesting work (e.g., on the Indonesian coup of 1965), but his foolish performance here is indicative of how J.F.K. addles intellectuals. Incidentally, in the "what if" department, one can easily argue that J.F.K., confident of having the liberals on his side, would have escalated harder and quicker than L.B.J., who had no such confidence in liberal support.

Michael Parenti is fighting a straw man. I never discounted the role of human agency, any more than did those who in 1968 thought Richard Nixon more likely to get the United States out of Vietnam than Hubert Humphrey, a highly tenable position. Would Bill Clinton or Paul Tsongas be "better" for Cuba in 1993 than George Bush? Maybe. Would Bush be "better" for the Palestinians? Possibly. There are, nonetheless, tendencies in U.S. capitalism, reflected in the policies of the elites, that have been demonstrably bad for Cuba and for Palestinians, whatever individual has been inhabiting the White House. Kennedy never challenged those tendencies or ran athwart them. (It was L.B.J. who ended Operation Mongoose.)

"Even if Kennedy was a total C.I.A. tool," Parenti concludes, "the fact that the President can be assassinated with impunity by elements in the national security state raises grave questions about the security of us all." Many of those writing to *The Nation* to abuse me apropos *JFK* made the same claim. But it isn't "a fact." It's a supposition, and even assuming the supposition were true, how was Parenti's safety placed in grave question? In politico/military/national security terms, probably the greatest threat to Parenti's safety came when J.F.K. brought the world to the brink of destruction during the Cuban missile crisis.

There's no 'golden key' rendering the overall system transparent.

JFK teeters between fascism and liberalism. In the idiom of the former, Stone has Garrison speak of the betrayed and slain "father-leader" whose children we are and whose revenge must be consummated before America can be free. On the liberal side of the ledger, Stone constantly promotes the idea, both in *JFK* and in other pronouncements, that J.F.K. was a good President, would have pulled out of Vietnam, made peace with Castro, caused the lion to lie down with the lamb.

Stone tries to have things both ways. He maintains that *JFK* is all true until someone demonstrates forcibly that it isn't. Then he tilts the other way and claims he is trying to construct an alternative myth. We should leave this "alternative myth" talk to the deconstruction industry. Myth making is a two-edged sword. Disraeli promoted a Jews-run-the-world theory; not so many years later the authors of the *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* happily expanded on the theme. The wizardry of the film lab, which can produce a grainy news film of L.B.J. making deals with the masterminds of J.F.K.'s assassination—part of Stone's mythic truth—can also produce Arafat urging Sirhan to kill R.F.K. Every artist deals in myth, but anyone arguing for Stone's manipulation of history should be aware of the morally tricky terrain and of the downside of myth making.

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There's no "golden key" (e.g., the "truth" about the Kennedy assassination; "proof" that George Bush flew to Paris on October 20, 1980) that will suddenly render the overall system transparent and vulnerable. People who look for golden keys are akin to those poor souls who thought the future could be decoded by measurements in the Great Pyramid.

A couple of house-cleaning points. The passing of Newman's book to Warner via Ellen Ray, *Bill* Schaap and Oliver Stone was something mentioned to me by Zack Sklar in the same phone conversation I had with him in Los Angeles, when I called him to get the exact words of Kevin Costner's Hamlet speech. Zack very decently looked up the script and dictated the passage to me, adding amid my reproaches for his role in formulating such revolting sentiments that it had been Stone's work alone. It turns out that Stone lifted the passage almost intact from Carl Oglesby's afterword to Jim Garrison's *On the Trail of the Assassins*. And I'm sorry to have said Ellen Ray started the whole cycle on account of a Catholic girlhood in Massachusetts. I thought it was true when I wrote it, and didn't think it a particularly low blow. Frankly I was and remain baffled by the spectacle of the editors of *Covert Action Information Bulletin* and *Lies of Our Times* promoting false history and bad politics.

Parenti says the left should support Oliver Stone and his *JFK* because the film does a "great service" in the delegitimation of a national security state that exterminated a leader who dared entertain critical views about such a state. This is core bunkum. What "great service" is being done here? The answer offered by one letter writer was that "*JFK* is one of the most important films of our time because Stone is literally *causing millions of people to think* [his italics], to wonder and ask questions. As a bonus, perhaps they will go to the polling booths in November to demand answers." But people are being asked to think about something that isn't true, so they'll be asking the wrong questions and thus getting useless answers. The effect of *JFK* is to make people think that America is a good country that produced a good President killed by bad elites who also nearly destroyed the good investigator of the crime. This is an infantile, inactivist prescription for politics, essentially inviting people to put their faith in another good President, whose inevitable foul-up can then be blamed on the same bad elites. In New Hampshire in mid-February, Daniel Patrick Moynihan stood in Nashua, citing it as J.F.K.'s first campaign stop in 1960, quoting J.F.K.'s call for "a new generation to lead this nation" and adding in praise of the candidate standing next to him, "John Kennedy was right then and Bob Kerrey is right today." This is the answer people leaving *JFK* and searching for answers in the polling booths will get. For the left in 1992, trying to figure out how to foster the mass movements of tomorrow, *JFK* offers nothing but another dose of lies about the past.

Alexander Cockburn

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tablishment" and saying it funds "pornographic and blasphemous art too shocking to show," and Donald Wildmon, who sent a letter to members of Congress excerpting photos and text from *The Portable Lower East Side*, a literary magazine that has received N.E.A. grants [see Elizabeth Pochoda, page 344]. Wildmon targeted two issues of the magazine, titled "Queer City" and "Live Sex Acts."

Design ©1990 by Hans Haacke, based on photo by Tom McGovern

John E. Frohnmayer: "The word political, I'm coming to see, means something different in Portland, Ore., than it does in Washington, D.C."

Questions of homophobia and society's need for disturbing art aside, it's clear that the membrane-thin wall separating the government grant-giving apparatus from oversight accountable to political rather than aesthetic criteria has been broken. To preserve this wall the N.E.A. operates via peer review panels when disbursing funds. While such a system may allow favoritism, and even poor art, its intent is to make artistic merit the yardstick. This position was already badly compromised in a bruising battle last fall that left in place language requiring the endowment to adhere to "general standards of decency" in work it funds.

The irony of the current situation is that the fright thrown into George Bush in New Hampshire has done what Jesse Helms has attempted to do for years. Before that primary, it looked as if the President wished to avoid a fight with the arts community this election year. His fiscal 1993 budget request for the N.E.A. is the same as the 1992 appropriation, $176 million, although the N.E.A.'s program grants—that is, the source of all the trouble in the past couple of years—will shrink by 6.3 percent, as administrative spending rises 8.1 percent and allocations to state, regional and community bodies grow 15 percent.

One can argue that local control is a positive value, but parochial pressures can also be the most acute: At the end of January, for example, legislators from Frederick County, in suburban Maryland, scotched a $500,000 matching grant that would have gone to the local Delaplaine Visual Arts Center because it displayed a painting about the New World Order that depicts George Bush and Dolly Parton naked and Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf carrying a shield with Hitler's face on it. Although the N.E.A. spends a scant 68 cents for each of us, what the right wants is clear: pork barrel art.

FOLLOW-UP

Remember K.A.L. 007, the Korean airliner shot down in 1983 over Soviet territory? In a special issue of *The Nation*, "K.A.L. 007: What the U.S. Knew and When We Knew It" [August 18/25, 1984], David Pearson argued that the official version of the story made no sense. But in the February 20 *New York Times*, aviation reporter Richard Witkin describes a new study by retired T.W.A. navigator Robert Allardyce and James Gollin apparently refuting the prevailing theory that the plane flew off course because of a single-digit mistake in keying flight coordinates into the navigation system. "Leading aviation officials accept the refutation as correct," Witkin reports. It has set off a new round of speculation on the circumstances of the shootdown, and whether the deviation from the original flight plan was accidental or intentional. If State Department, N.S.A. and other files relating to K.A.L. 007 were opened, the mystery might be solved. Until then, over and out.

Malek Redux

In 1988 a Bush campaign adviser resigned after it became public knowledge that he had compiled a list of Jews in the Bureau of Labor Statistics during the Nixon Administration, indulging Nixon's paranoia that there was a "Jewish cabal" in the bureau bent on making him look bad [see David Corn, "Beltway Bandits," September 16, 1991].

The adviser's name was Frederic Malek, and in 1992 he is George Bush's campaign manager.

At the height of the controversy in 1988, Bush stood by Malek, explaining that his adviser was no anti-Semite but had chosen to resign because "he did not want this campaign to be caught up in allegations about something that happened many years ago and that some might try to use against me." Bush's concern was warranted. The Jewish list was not the only incident from Malek's past that might have been damaging to a presidential campaign.

Working for Nixon in the early 1970s, Malek was the architect of the White House's secret "responsiveness" program, one of the most blatantly political schemes in recent history. A key goal of the program, according to documents later made public by the Senate Watergate Committee, was to reward supporters of Nixon's 1972 re-election by giving them federal grants and contracts and to punish critics by cutting off federal funds.

In a briefing paper dated May 26, 1972, Malek wrote, "All major grants and construction decisions for next fiscal year were reviewed prior to the finalization of the budgets to ensure to the extent possible they impacted on politically beneficial areas." Another responsiveness paper, written by a Malek aide and circulated among high-level White House officials, describes a system in which members of the campaign staff would designate certain pending grants as political "musts." According to the plan, Bill Gifford of the Office of Management and Budget "will then ensure those identified are among those approved. . . . Gifford must be flexible on pushing a 'must' grant in case it turns out to be substantively irresponsible or an obvious waste of government funds. . . . *In such cases, Gifford would weigh the substantive drawbacks and risk of adverse publicity against the ex-*

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EDITORIALS.

Pork Barrel Art

"Sometime when the river is ice ask me/mistakes I have made," wrote the poet William Stafford. These lines were recited by N.E.A. chairman John Frohnmayer to his staff after informing them that he would be leaving, effective May 1. We could ask, now that the arts climate is sufficiently chilled, why he suggested last July that "we cannot look strictly at artistic excellence in a vacuum, but we have to look at how it's going to play in an audience," or why he went on to declare that if art is "offensive" enough that it "simply leads to confrontation and solidification of positions . . . then in my view that would not be appropriate for public funding." It offers little solace to note that in his political death throes, Frohnmayer endorsed "a vigorous clash of ideas" and said that government "must support the arts—at a substantial level and without content restrictions. Only by so doing does our government encourage us to dare, to create, to grow."

The proximate causes of Frohnmayer's departure are Pat Buchanan, who is making the National Endowment for the Arts an electoral issue by dubbing it "the upholstered playpen of the arts and crafts auxiliary of the Eastern liberal es-

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LETTERS.

'ABOUT THAT AD . . . '

Portland, Ore.
You are right: The ad for Positive Realism's program to "straighten out" gays and lesbians is thoroughly offensive to queer readers and flies in the face of everything *The Nation* stands for, with the possible exception of free speech. The ad strikes me, a proud gay man, as equivalent in its obscenity to an ad for child pornography or a recruitment ad for the K.K.K. In your "apology" for running the ad ["About That Ad," Feb. 10] you make the common progressive mistake of treating gay issues as merely political. It is more than a political issue; the ad insults the integrity and dignity of gays and lesbians.

An ad like this is dangerous. Someone struggling with his or her sexuality might attempt this program. It would inevitably fail and reinforce the belief that being gay or lesbian is a disorder and that the person must truly be diseased because he or she failed to become straight.

Here is a good idea for all the lesbians and gays who came away from that ad with that familiar dull sense of rage. Call that silly outfit and tell them exactly how happy we are being what we are, and that even if we could change, we would never want to. *Bill Wilkerson*

ABOUT THAT DISCLAIMER . . .

Studio City, Calif.
Please stop confusing censorship with editorial policy. You don't run right-wing editorials. Is *that* censorship? Surely you reject unsolicited manuscripts that are well written but politically incorrect. Is *that* censorship? Well, guess what? You don't *have* to run a politically, humanly incorrect ad just because it "does not seem fraudulent." It's a free country! You have the right to reject ads! In fact, your other disclaimer, the one on the Classified page, begins with your "right to . . . reject . . . any advertisement." So if you didn't reject this ad what *do* you reject? Disclaimer or no, your acceptance of that ad endorses it. I considered canceling my subscription, but I'll wait for your Institute for Historical Review double truck. *Sharon Bell*

PRINT IT

Burlington, Vt.
You made the proper decision to print the "Gay to Straight" ad. Censorship is no way to educate people as to what is offensive.
Barry Trachtenberg

FROM THE ADVERTISER

Culver City, Calif.
I appreciate *The Nation*'s spirit of open discussion. I don't view homosexuality as evil or a disease. I consider it an unhealthy choice—nothing more or less. There are many people with homosexual feelings who are unhappy about it. I help them change. I am against eliminating a homosexual from any job he is qualified for. I also think homosexuals should be allowed to marry, even though I don't recommend it. My gripe is not with homosexuals. I have no licenses or degrees. For the last seven years I have been helping people make the change from gay to straight. My gripe is with the "experts" who claim it can't be done.
Joe Zychik, director
Positive Realism

ALTERNATIVELY . . .

San Francisco

TIRED OF BREEDING BABIES?
Stop adding people to an overcrowded world.
STRAIGHT TO GAY
IT CAN BE DONE
You too can be socially responsible!
(Many already have)

John Dunlap

'TWOFOLD OVERSIGHT'

Paris
Why was Gilberto Perez—whose name is unfamiliar to me but whom I take to be an informed film scholar—so unkind, indeed so unscrupulous, as to fault at some length (for "modernism" and "proletarian sentimentalism," which is fair enough) an article of mine on W.S. Porter published some fifteen years ago, at the very outset of my work on the period, while studiously ignoring my book *Life to Those Shadows*, which appeared early this year and which, being entirely devoted to the early cinema, would have fit nicely, it seems, into a review dealing with recent publications on the subject ["In the Beginning," Nov. 4]. The book devotes exactly 100 pages to the question of the social composition of early film audiences in Britain, France and the United States and shows that I believe that blanket answers, encompassing different social formations, are wholly inadequate.

As for the "modernism" of the early cinema, I have shown the fallacy of this projective reading (including my own early tendency to sacrifice to it) in an article published eight years ago and collected in another book that also appeared at the beginning of this year, *In and Out of Synch*. A twofold oversight seems unlikely. My impression is that any scruples were simply overridden by the desire to produce a "neat" article. *Noël Burch*

PEREZ REPLIES

New York City
The three books I chose to review (among several others I could have reviewed, including Burch's) were a sampling that enabled me to consider certain important issues pertaining to early cinema and to film history and theory more widely. Because Burch made a significant contribution to the rethinking of early cinema that has taken place in recent years, I mentioned him in my article even though I wasn't reviewing his book. I thought I was recognizing him rather than attacking him (for me "modernism" is not a term of attack, and "proletarian sentimentalism"—his term, not mine—is nothing to be ashamed of), and it didn't occur to me that he would take offense.

I understand his wanting to make clear that he has changed his mind; but his accusing me of unscrupulously suppressing that development is another matter. His response seems to me symptomatic of something larger than personal vanity. I gather that Burch expected from my article—expected as his due and when he didn't receive it became upset—the kind of profuse citing and footnoting by which academics flatter other academics and advance their careers: This is vanity institutionalized. I have a measure of personal vanity myself; for some two decades now I have been publishing articles on film that I believe are not negligible, and I was a little surprised to find that prior to this article Burch hadn't heard of me. But I have never joined the footnoters' club, and so I am without the expectations of institutionalized vanity. I take no offense. *Gilberto Perez*

OF CHRISTIC, CORN & CASEY

Los Angeles
David Corn has proved himself once again the master straw-man destroyer ["Beltway Bandits," Jan. 27]. He talks about the "silly 'secret team' " theory (now dubbed S.S.T. for short) of "the Christics," then describes something that bears only the faintest resemblance to the Christic Institute's actual theories. Both he and Alexander Cockburn have consistently missed what we have been saying about our defendants' links to the government and their quasi-official status as an extension of U.S. policy. A student volunteer in the Los Angeles office understands better. In a letter to several colleges, David Newton states: "Since 1985 investigators and attorneys from the Christic Institute have been involved in a lawsuit which has led to a revelation of former government employees who now operate out of the private sector for greater deniability, but who are in effect an illegal extension of government power." Former C.I.A. Director Bill Casey as quoted by Gen. John Singlaub commented about this "silly" Christic group, "These people could be dangerous, Jack. . . . They're more than just a nuisance." One would hope that progressive journalists would have an analysis at least as profound as Bill Casey's.
William J. Davis
Christic Institute

CORN REPLIES

Washington
Well aware of the fanaticism of the Christic Institute and its supporters, I examined Chris-

(Continued on Page 356)

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